



What You Can Do About the Flu

McGill University will do its utmost to look after its students in the event of a widespread H1N1 outbreak on campus, but you can do a lot more for yourself than the University can do for you by having a Personal Influenza Plan. This is especially important for out-of-town students living on their own, because your usual network of family and friends may not be in a position to help you. Please help protect your health and the health of the campus community by taking proper precautions to reduce the risk of spreading or contracting H1N1, and make a Personal Influenza Plan just in case you do get sick. For more information, go to www.mcgill.ca/health.

Precautions and Planning

Buy your own thermometer, tissues, acetaminophen (Tylenol® and other brands) or **ibuprofen** (Advil® and other brands.)

Note: *People under age 20 should avoid taking Aspirin for fever and infections, because of the possibility of developing Reye's Syndrome.*

Buy your own supply of liquid hand soap and gel hand sanitizer (Purel® or other brands with at least 60% alcohol content.)

Save the Student Health Services phone number to your phone: 514-398-6017 (downtown campus) or **514-398-7992** (Macdonald campus.) For non-urgent calls, you can leave a message at the **Health & Wellness Info Line, 514-398-4506**, and someone will call you back.

Bookmark www.mcgill.ca/health and watch it regularly for updates and announcements on H1N1.

Make a Personal Influenza Plan. Do you have any health conditions that might put you at higher risk for more severe illness? Where will you recuperate if you get sick? If you live alone, who will help if you need groceries or other supplies brought to you? Where do you keep the contact info for everyone you should alert if you have to self-isolate (Instructors, employer, family, etc.)?

Get a flu buddy. A flu buddy will usually be a friend, someone you can trust who can keep in touch and help look after you if you happen to catch the flu. If possible, you should have at least two flu buddies to back each other up. Flu buddies should not live in the same house, apartment or residence floor, to reduce the likelihood that they will all be sick at the same time. Flu buddies should check in regularly to see how their friend is doing, collect any medications that might be needed, help with basic tasks like shopping, and be there to seek additional help if their friend's illness becomes serious.

Get into the hand washing habit. Always wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before eating, drinking, or preparing food; after using the bathroom; and if you cough or sneeze into your hand or a tissue. If soap and water aren't available, you can use hand sanitizer, but try to wash your hands with soap and water after several applications of sanitizer, especially before eating. Details at www.mcgill.ca/health/infectioncontrol/handwashing/.

Practice coughing and sneezing into your sleeve in the fold of your elbow. Viruses can't stay viable as long or spread as easily from there as they can from your hands. Details at www.mcgill.ca/health/infectioncontrol/sleeve/.

Try to keep hands away from eyes, nose, and mouth. Wash your hands more often if you smoke or bite your nails.

Get your regular seasonal flu shot as soon as it becomes available.

Get your H1N1 flu shot as soon as it becomes available, especially if you are in one of the high risk groups.

If you are in close contact with someone who has the flu, don't panic, and don't blame.

Influenza may be very common on campus this fall, and people may get sick despite their best efforts. However, students with high-risk conditions should call their healthcare providers promptly, as medication may be recommended in some cases to prevent influenza.

"High-risk" medical conditions include: asthma or other chronic pulmonary disease; cancer; cardiovascular disease; diabetes; pregnancy; weakened immune system due to HIV/AIDS or other immunosuppressive conditions; or kidney, liver, blood, or neurological disorders.

Note: "High-risk" doesn't mean you're at higher risk of getting sick, but these conditions are associated with a higher likelihood of complications if you do get the flu.

Cold

comes on gradually
fever unlikely
cough possible
sore throat possible
stomach feels okay
body aches unlikely
chills unlikely
stuffy/runny nose possible

Flu

comes on quickly
fever probable
dry cough possible
sore throat possible
vomiting, diarrhea possible
body aches possible
chills possible
stuffy/runny nose possible

More details at www.mcgill.ca/health/h1n1/symptoms/



If You Do Get Sick, Activate your Personal Influenza Plan

Take your temperature. If you have a fever (100°F/37.8°C or higher), you must stay home from work and class until you are completely fever-free (without fever-reducing medication) for at least 24 hours, and you feel well. For most people, this will be 3 to 8 days. You can remain infectious for up to 8 days.

If you have a high-risk medical condition as noted above, call your health care provider. Although antiviral medications like Tamiflu and Relenza are not recommended for most healthy individuals, they are recommended for some high-risk cases and should be taken as soon as possible.

Most people recover on their own without medical treatment. Drink fluids to stay hydrated, get plenty of rest, eat what you can, and use ibuprofen and acetaminophen, as directed, to manage fever and body aches. Call a health care provider if your symptoms are not improving after 3 to 4 days.

Go to your recuperation location. People with flu generally feel weak, achy, and fatigued for a few days and maybe up to a week. Some people will be able to go home or to a nearby relative's home to recuperate. This is strongly recommended for students living in University residences; if you can relocate without using public transportation, please do so. If you will be staying in a household you share with others, avoid sharing common spaces with them while you're sick. If you live alone, call a friend or your flu buddy to bring supplies to your door rather than going shopping.

If you live in a McGill residence, you must promptly alert Residence staff that you have flu-like symptoms so you can be brought up to date about the current procedures, ensure communication, and arrange for food. McGill Food and Dining Services will ensure that appropriate meals are made available to students living in Residence who become sick.

Try to stay in one room with the door closed. If someone is helping care for you, make sure that person does not have a "high-risk" condition, and you always wear a surgical mask or bandanna over your face while that person is in the room with you. If possible, use a separate bathroom while you are sick. Whenever you leave your room, use hand sanitizer before exiting, and wear your mask over your mouth and nose until you are back in your room. Everyone in the household should wash their hands well and often and clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as doorknobs, bathroom faucets, and refrigerator handles regularly.

Communicate. Cancel any appointments (with your advisor, dentist, etc.), and contact your professors, TAs, and employer to let them know you have influenza – like symptoms and cannot return until you are better. As with any illness, you will be responsible for getting assignments you have missed and making arrangements to make up work after you recover.

Tell your close contacts you may have the flu. This means roommates/housemates and officemates; also, any friends, lab partners and other people you spent time with in the 24 hours before you started to feel sick in order to inform them they may have been exposed.

Self-Isolate. You should not go to the library, the student union building, restaurants, or any social events, nor use public transportation. Flu viruses can survive on surfaces from a few hours to as long as two days. If you have the flu, do not share towels, clothing, eating utensils, keyboards, remote controls, etc., while you are infectious. Standard cleaning products should be sufficient to remove viruses from surfaces, but water alone is not enough. When you recover, wash your own sheets and towels. Empty your wastebasket of used tissues, etc., and take out the trash yourself.

The good news? If the thing that made you sick was H1N1, you can't get it again. But you can still catch colds, seasonal influenza, and other flu-like illnesses, so keep up the hand washing! Because you won't necessarily know which virus made you sick, seasonal and H1N1 vaccinations are still recommended.

Seek immediate medical attention if you develop any of the following:

- shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- confusion or sudden dizziness
- pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- flu-like symptoms that improve but then return
- severe or persistent vomiting suddenly with fever and worse cough