

H1N1 Influenza Update

Marshall University is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for working and learning. The H1N1 influenza is a reality across the nation, and University officials have been actively addressing the issue on campus. Please visit the university's influenza web site (<http://www.marshall.edu/safety/health/influenza.asp>) for more information on our planning and prevention efforts, and the latest updates throughout the academic year. Consistent with the advice of public health authorities, Marshall University plans to remain operational and continue our educational mission in the face of possible outbreaks on campus.

It is important for you to know the ways in which you, as a student and as a parent, can help yourself and your son or daughter—and, by extension, the entire MU community—to prevent the unnecessary spread of flu and infection.

First, if you have influenza-like symptoms (fever of 100.4 °F or greater, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, vomiting or diarrhea) **stay home**. Please do not attend class or other social functions until you are fever free without the use of medications (at rest, temperature less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit) for at least 24 hours. Fever is a key factor, but it is not always present with H1N1 flu. If you have the other symptoms listed but have no fever, call your personal health professional or Student Health Services for advice.

In accordance with current CDC recommendations, students should plan to return home if possible. If you are ill, you should not drive and should not use public transportation in order to prevent the spread of illness. Parents, please develop a plan to have your child return home in case they become ill.

If you have any chronic illnesses such as asthma or diabetes, or are pregnant, please discuss any precautions that you might need to take with a health professional. Students have access to medical professionals at Student Health Services.

Student Health Services is located on the second floor of the Marshall Medical Center at Cabell-Huntington Hospital. Walk-ins are welcome from 8:00 am to 10:45 am and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, when classes are in session. Appointments are strongly encouraged and can be set up by calling (304) 691-1100.

Ill persons are encouraged to self-care as the illness is presently mild and most people do not require medical attention. The use of fever-reducing medication, drinking plenty of fluids, and resting are the main means of dealing with the flu.

You should seek immediate medical attention if you have difficulty breathing or chest pain; have purple or blue discoloration of the lips; are vomiting and unable to keep liquids down and have signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, have seizures

(i.e., uncontrolled convulsions), or are less responsive than normal or become confused. Call Public Safety at (304) 696-4357, or 911.

Second, students will need to notify professors or the Dean of Student Affairs (hensley@marshall.edu or 304-696-6423) to arrange for University-excused absence. Most people have found that the illness lasts for approximately 5 days, so anticipate being out of class for that duration. If you are living in a residence hall, notify your Resident Advisor (RA). RAs will be able to assist you with information about having food delivered to your room and Residence Life staff will check on you throughout your illness. Also, ill students in residence halls who have roommates will be encouraged to move to a floor that is isolated from most other students in order to minimize the spread of the virus. Students are encouraged to provide a cell phone number so Residence Life staff can contact them and to place food orders to be delivered to them.

All students, whether living in University housing or off-campus, should prepare a "self-care kit" with items such as a thermometer, fever reducing medicine (acetaminophen or ibuprofen, not aspirin), tissues, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, surgical masks (to be used when in shared space like restrooms or when roommates cannot relocate), Gatorade or other electrolyte-type drinks, water, and nonperishable food items such as protein bars and soups. Marshall University will provide food to ill students living in residence halls, but these students should also be prepared to self-care.

How Can I Decrease My Chances of Getting Flu?

The best way to stay healthy is to wash your hands often and vigorously for 30 seconds with soap and water; cough or sneeze into a tissue, or if not available, into your sleeve NOT into your hands. Keep your hands away from your face. Hand sanitizers are also effective when soap and water are not immediately available, especially prior to eating, or after shaking hands or touching high traffic and high usage hard surfaces (phones, computer keyboards, etc). Sanitizer stations are located in common areas of every campus building. While you can count on Marshall to be vigilant in keeping high traffic areas clean, it is important that each student take precautions to increase our ability to reduce the spread of germs and flu.

Seasonal influenza vaccine is now available and free vaccination clinics have been held on campus. Students can still receive the vaccine at the Cabell Huntington Health Department. Similarly, when H1N1 vaccine becomes available students will also be offered the vaccine at no charge. H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available in late October and more information will be provided when available.