

Protect Yourself... and others from influenza



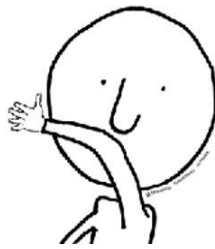
Stop the spread of viruses that
make you and others sick!



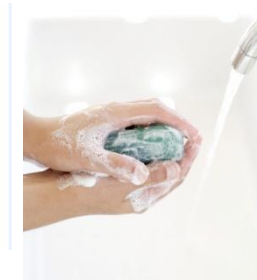
Cover your mouth
and nose when you
cough or sneeze.



Throw tissues
away immediately.



No tissue? Cough
or sneeze into
elbow or upper
sleeve, not your
hands.



Clean your hands
often with soap and
warm water, or
alcohol based hand
cleanser.



Stay home if you
are sick.



WesternStudent
housing ltd.

Frequently Asked Questions *

What is H1N1 flu virus (human swine flu)?

H1N1 flu virus is a type of flu virus that regularly infects pigs, but may also make people sick. It is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of the regular human seasonal flu. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared it a pandemic flu virus, but note that **“the overwhelming majority of patients experience mild symptoms and make a rapid and full recovery, often in the absence of any form of medical treatment.”** H1N1 flu cases identified in BC continue to be associated with relatively mild symptoms, and at the time of writing, there is no evidence of any increase in severe respiratory illness in this province.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 flu virus?

Symptoms are similar to the common flu and can include high fever, cough, headache, general aches, fatigue, eye pain, shortness of breath and lack of appetite. Some people have also reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

How is H1N1 flu virus spread?

H1N1 flu virus is mainly spread person-to-person through coughing or sneezing by people infected with the H1N1 flu virus. People may also become infected by touching something with the H1N1 flu virus or germs on it, such as counters, handrails, doorknobs, keyboards and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

How can I reduce the risk of getting H1N1 flu virus or spreading the virus to others?

Review the prevention strategies provided in this brochure. Each person is expected to take personal responsibility to reduce the risks of getting or spreading the flu, and to ensure they have prepared in case they become ill.

What should I do if I've been in contact with someone who has H1N1 flu virus?

If you are told you have been in contact with someone who has H1N1 flu virus, it is very important to monitor yourself for symptoms, including fever and new or worsening cough. If you are not feeling sick, you do not need to stay home from class or work, see a doctor or take preventative medicine. Individuals can call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca if they have questions or concerns.

What should I do if I think I'm sick with the H1N1 flu virus?

You should self-isolate, which means staying in your room and limiting contact with others. It is expected that most people will recover from H1N1 without needing medical care. Treat mild symptoms as you normally would; with rest, fluids and over-the-counter flu medication. This will decrease the chance of spreading the virus to other people. If you need health advice, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca.

Read on for more information about self-isolation.

What should I do if my symptoms become worse?

You should call ahead to book an appointment with your doctor, or HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, and follow their advice. If your symptoms are severe (difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, severe or persistent vomiting, confusion), go to your local Urgent Care Centre or Emergency Department. Tell the health care staff if you have been exposed to someone with H1N1 flu virus.

What should I do if another resident has flu-like symptoms?

If the individual's symptoms are consistent with H1N1 advise them to follow the recommendations listed above. Assist that individual in getting food and beverages, if needed, and making alternative arrangements so that their academic responsibilities can be fulfilled once they have recovered.

Where can I get more information?

If you are feeling sick or need health advice, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca.

- For more information on how to fight the flu, visit www.fightflu.ca
- For the latest information available, visit www.gov.bc.ca/health
- For up-to-date VIU information about H1N1 flu virus, visit, <http://www.viu.ca/healthandsafety/SwineInfluenzaUpdate.asp>

Self-Isolation **

What is self-isolation?

A person may be placed on self-isolation if they have an infectious illness such as the flu. Isolation means staying at home, not going outside, not going to work, school or other public places and not meeting with other people.

While at home, the person who is sick should stay isolated or away from other household members as much as possible.

Why am I self-isolating?

You are in self-isolation to prevent spreading the flu to other people. It also gives you time to recover from the flu. The influenza virus is contagious for 24 hours before symptoms start and for about seven days after the symptoms start.

How long do I have to stay in self-isolation?

You should be in self-isolation until 24 hours after your fever is gone (as measured without using fever-reducing medicine).

Are my roommates, bathroom mate or floor mates safe?

Room, bathroom and/or floor mates should stay away from the isolated person as much as possible and try to keep a one-meter (three-foot) distance when contact is unavoidable.

All room, bathroom and/or floor mates, and the isolated person, should wash their hands often, using soap and warm water.

Everyone should frequently clean high-touch surfaces in their shared bathrooms, kitchens, and dining/living room.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has advised that regular household cleaning products are sufficient.

Will I or my roommate be moved if one of us is ill?

This will not likely occur. Healthcare professionals advise that because the ill person has been contagious 24–48 hours prior to the flu symptoms appearing, roommates in an apartment, or that share a bathroom may have already been exposed to the virus. Therefore relocating either the ill person or their roommate is unlikely to be effective in stopping infection. Their advice is to follow the guidelines for household contact at <http://www.phacaspc.gc.ca/alerte/alerte/h1n1/guidance-orientation-05-03-eng.php> including keeping some distance, not sharing items, practicing good hand-washing/sanitizing and cough hygiene.

What can I do to prevent the spread of influenza while under self-isolation?

- Hand sanitizer, and Lysol Disinfecting wipes are available for purchase at the front desk of the Cedar Activity Center.
- The sick person should stay in their room with the door closed to separate themselves from healthy floor and bathroom mates.
- Stay in touch with family and friends by phone, texting, and email.
- Wash hard surfaces and items handled by the isolated person thoroughly with soap and hot water and a disinfectant.
- Discourage any visits from people who do not live in the unit.
- All bathroom/unit-mates, including the sick person, should wash their hands frequently using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Keep personal items, such as towels, separate from others.
- Do not share eating utensils or drinks.
- Dishes and laundry should be washed with warm water and soap as usual.

What can I do to get better? ***

- Get plenty of rest. You will probably feel very tired and weak. Resting allows your body to recover from influenza.

- Drink plenty of fluids. Water, juices, clear broths and soups will replace the fluids lost, especially if you have a fever. Warm fluids may help loosen mucus in your throat and lungs.

- Treat fever or muscle aches with fever-reducing medicine. Always follow the directions on the package about how much and how often to take it.

How can I get fluids and food when self-isolating?

- Plan ahead by keeping an emergency supply of juice, soda, soup, fever-reducing medicine, tissues, a thermometer, and plastic wastebasket liners in your room. Have some cash tucked away in case you need to ask a friend or unit-mate to get you more supplies from the convenience store.

- VIU *Care Packages* containing a two day supply of juice, water, soup, crackers, cereal, milk and other items are available for purchase online at <https://www.viubookstore.ca/viumerchandise>, or by phone (250) 740-6200. The kit will be delivered to your room by a WSH Staff member.

- In the apartment-style residences, your friends and unit-mates are typically willing to bring you fluids and soup from the local convenience or grocery store if you've run out.

Should I wear a mask?

The Public Health Agency of Canada does not recommend that healthy people wear masks as they go about their daily lives in the community. There is no evidence to suggest that wearing masks will prevent the spread of infection in the general population. Masks do not act as an effective barrier against disease when they are worn for extended periods of time. In addition, removing your mask incorrectly can spread the virus to your hands and face. Basic infection control practices, like washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, avoiding close contact with people who are sick are the most important in preventing the transmission of influenza.

The situation is different for a person who is ill and who must go out into the community (for example, to seek medical care). In that case, it is recommended taking measures to avoid exposing others to the virus, such as coughing or sneezing into a disposable tissue or sleeve, and avoiding crowds (like mass transit). A face mask should be worn by the sick person, if one is available, to reduce the risk of spreading the virus within the community.

Who in residence should I tell that I'm ill?

- Let your Residence Advisor know, or call the Front Desk at (250) 754-6338 to report that you have flu-like symptoms and are self-isolating. Tell the Front Desk staff your name, student number, room number, and when you became sick.

- Stay in regular contact with your rez friends and your family by phone, email, or texting.

- Advise your professors and instructors by email or phone if you are ill and suspect you may have H1N1.

Please continue to monitor

<http://www.viu.ca/healthandsafety/SwineInfluenzaUpdate.asp> for the latest information on the H1N1 flu situation.

* Adapted from Vancouver Coastal Health
http://www.vch.ca/public/h1n1update_ga.htm

** Adapted from Vancouver Coastal Health
http://www.vch.ca/public/h1n1update_isolation.htm

*** Adapted from Vancouver Coastal Health
http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/Look_after_yourself.pdf