



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
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Commissioner

Guidance for Responding to Influenza for Institutions of Higher Education: 2009-2010 Academic Year

October 21, 2009

Decisions about management of patients should be made based on clinical judgment and current surveillance data. The following recommendations apply only when influenza viruses are circulating in NYC. Check nyc.gov/flu often to find out when influenza viruses begin to circulate more widely in NYC.

This guidance can help stop the spread of both seasonal and novel H1N1 influenza among students, faculty, and staff of institutions of higher education (IHE).

- Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that spreads mainly through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. More than 2,000 New Yorkers die of seasonal influenza every year.
- Stopping the spread of influenza at IHEs is important. Many cases of novel H1N1 influenza have occurred among school-aged children and young adults, who are also at risk for seasonal influenza. When students, faculty, or staff get sick with influenza, the virus can spread within the institution and in the larger community.
- To help stop the spread of influenza, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) advises IHEs to:
 1. Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations for institutions of higher education.
 2. Provide or promote seasonal and novel H1N1 influenza vaccines.
 3. Implement and promote basic influenza prevention measures.
 4. Report clusters of influenza-like illness (ILI: fever of 100°F [37.8°C] or higher AND cough or sore throat) to the DOHMH.
 5. Stay informed! Visit www.nyc.gov/flu for updates.
 6. Know the basics about influenza.

1. Follow CDC recommendations for responding to influenza.

The following CDC guidelines offer strategies, protocols, and detailed explanations and instruction to help institutions curb the spread of influenza. These guidelines are available online at the CDC Web site.

- CDC Guidance for Responses to Influenza for Institutions of Higher Education During the 2009-2010 Academic Year (<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance>).
 - Technical Report on CDC Guidance for Responses to Influenza for Institutions of Higher Education during the 2009-2010 Academic Year (<http://www.flu.gov/professional/school/higheredtechreport.html>).
 - Preparing for the Flu: A Communication Toolkit for Institutions of Higher Education (<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/institutions/toolkit>).
2. Provide or promote the novel H1N1 influenza vaccine.
- IHEs that have a medical clinic can order novel H1N1 vaccine through the New York City Health Department if they register with the Citywide Immunization Registry. For more information, call 212-676-2323 or visit www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cir/a03c.html.
 - IHEs without a medical clinic should advise students to get the seasonal and novel H1N1 vaccines from their doctors, or from one of the vaccination centers set up across the city. Visit www.nyc.gov/flu for locations.
3. Implement and promote basic influenza prevention measures.
- Promote vaccination.
 - Encourage students, faculty, and staff to:
 - Cover their mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing and use a tissue – not a hand.
 - Wash their hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
 - Tell students, faculty, and staff what to do if they develop ILI:
 - STAY HOME (out of class and away from school-related activities) until your fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
 - CALL THE DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY if they have any of the following risk factors and either have ILI or have been in close contact with someone who has ILI:
 - Pregnancy (current or within past 2 weeks)
 - Age younger than 2 or older than 64
 - Asthma or any other chronic respiratory diseases
 - Heart, kidney, or liver disease, except hypertension
 - Hematologic diseases, such as sickle cell anemia
 - Metabolic disorders, such as diabetes
 - Weakened immune system, from illness or medication
 - Neuromuscular disorders that interfere with breathing or the discharge of mucus
 - Long-term aspirin therapy (in people under 19 years of age)
4. Report clusters of ILI to the DOHMH.
- The DOHMH is interested in hearing about any outbreaks of ILI in university and college settings during the early fall until there is evidence of citywide transmission of influenza. Call the DOHMH at 212-788-9830 to report any

outbreaks. Once citywide transmission has been confirmed, there is no reason to report ILI clusters, unless consultation on outbreak management is desired.

- Report initial clusters of ILI in 5 or more students, faculty, or staff. For example, a cluster might include students, faculty, or staff who reside in the same dormitory or other group residential setting, or who share common work or other activities.

5. Stay informed! Visit www.nyc.gov/flu for updates.

- Check New York City information and recommendations (which may sometimes differ from national CDC guidelines).
- Obtain public-education materials in English and other languages, including “Cover Your Cough” and “Wash Your Hands” posters, and Health Bulletin #75 “Prevent Influenza – Get Vaccinated!”
- Review weekly surveillance updates – posted every Friday – to track trends in ILI, including which seasonal and novel H1N1 viruses are circulating in the city.
- Find complete information on the seasonal and novel H1N1 vaccines, including how to order vaccine, who should be vaccinated, and where to get a flu vaccine, including free or low-cost vaccines.

6. Know the basics about novel H1N1 influenza.

- Although most persons diagnosed with novel H1N1 influenza to date have experienced mild illness, more serious illness has also occurred, especially (but not exclusively) among those with chronic health conditions that place them at risk for complications of seasonal influenza.
- Like any influenza virus, novel H1N1 is spread mainly through respiratory droplets that are released when an infected person sneezes or coughs. People in close proximity can become infected if these droplets contact their mouth, nose, or eyes, or if they touch a person or surface with virus on it (like a door knob or telephone receiver) and then touch their mouth, nose, or eyes.
- The same measures that reduce transmission of seasonal influenza (handwashing, eg) will also reduce transmission of novel H1N1 influenza:
- IHEs can reduce the spread of influenza by rapidly identifying ill students and staff who should be excluded from classes and all school-related activities when ill.
- Most people with ILI do not need to be tested for influenza. If there is an outbreak of ILI at an institution early in the Fall, before there is community-wide influenza transmission in New York City, influenza testing at the Health Department’s laboratory may be available to help determine the cause of the outbreak.