

Pandemic Influenza Response

There have been numerous outbreaks of H1N1 influenza (swine flu) at universities around the United States. So far, we've had one confirmed case of H1N1 influenza at The King's College. Others in our community have displayed flu-like symptoms that may have been caused by the H1N1 virus. Public health officials and medical authorities are not recommending laboratory tests to confirm H1N1 infection. Since H1N1 is the dominant strain of flu in circulation at this time, it is assumed that most flu infections are being caused by the H1N1 virus. In the majority of cases, symptoms are relatively mild and individuals recover within 4-5 days.

We are working with the [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#) and the [Center for Disease Control](#) to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our institution.

According to the CDC, the rate of H1N1 infections is currently increasing nationwide. We are anticipating the possibility of further cases in the King's community and taking measures to protect the health of students, faculty and staff.

We are particularly focused on taking steps to prevent the spread of flu – both H1N1 and seasonal flu - at King's so that we can keep our institution operating as usual. We need your help to accomplish this. As you know, flu can be spread easily from person to person. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

What measures can be taken to prevent the spread of flu?

- Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective. We have placed hand sanitizer in public areas of the college for students, staff and faculty to use.
- Practice respiratory etiquette by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands. Germs are spread this way.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, especially have touching commonly-touched surfaces (e.g. subway hand bars; door handles; etc.).
- Stay in your residence if you have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever.
- Talk with your health care provider about whether you should be vaccinated for seasonal flu. Flu shots are available at [Walgreens](#) in the Empire State Building for \$24.99. Call (212) 868-5790 to schedule an appointment. The H1N1 vaccine was approved by the FDA on September 15 and should be available to the public beginning mid-October.

What should King's College students or staff/faculty members do if they get the flu?

- The CDC recommends that people with flu-like illness remain at in their residence and away from other people until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit) or signs of a fever (chills, feeling very warm, flushed appearance, sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
- It is very important to get adequate rest and stay hydrated. Hydration is maintained through regular consumption of water, Gatorade, broths, etc.

- If the fever persists, or worsens, see a doctor. House Chamberlains are available to accompany students to the hospital as the need arises.
- If you become aware of students who display flu-like symptoms, please have them notify a member of Student Development so that we can respond appropriately and ensure that they receive adequate care.
- People at higher risk for flu complications due to underlying medical conditions (e.g. asthma, heart disease, diabetes) who become sick should contact their healthcare provider as soon as possible to determine if they need antiviral treatment.

What are the symptoms of seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu?

Symptoms of flu include fever or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

How do I recognize a fever or signs of a fever?

A fever is a temperature that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius when taken with a thermometer. Look for these possible signs of fever: person feels very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.

How do I know if someone has H1N1 flu or seasonal flu?

It will be very difficult to tell if someone who is sick has H1N1 flu versus seasonal flu. Public health officials and medical authorities are generally not recommending laboratory tests. Anyone who has the symptoms of flu-like illness should stay home and not go to class or work.

What fever-reducing medications can students, faculty, and staff take when sick?

Fever-reducing medications are medicines that contain acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen (such as Motrin). These medicines can be given to people who are sick with flu to help bring their fever down and relieve their pain. Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) should not be given to anyone younger than 18 years of age who have flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye’s syndrome.

What steps should students take if their roommate is sick with the flu?

- If a roommate or someone with whom you are in close contact has influenza, try to minimize direct, face-to-face contact with the ill individual. You can request that the individual wear a surgical mask, if tolerable, when around you. Free surgical masks are available from Student Services.
- Wash your hands frequently with hand sanitizer or warm water and soap.
- Get plenty of sleep and maintain healthy eating habits to help your immune system.
- Frequently clean commonly-touched surfaces in the room.

For the most up-to-date information on flu, visit www.flu.gov. You may also find the New York Department of Health’s [H1N1 fact sheet](#) helpful.

Further updates will be provided as the situation evolves.