

Letter to instructional faculty about H1N1 influenza

Dear VA Tech Teaching Faculty and Staff:

As you begin a new academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some information regarding the seasonal flu and the novel H1N1 flu.

Currently this new flu virus appears to be no more threatening than the routine seasonal flu that comes every year from November to April. The H1N1 flu has the same properties in terms of spread as the seasonal flu viruses. I cannot stress enough the importance of everyday actions that you individually can do to help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. These actions include:

- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. You can also use alcohol-based hand cleaners, which are effective against influenza viruses.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth, as the virus can spread this way.
- Avoiding close contact with sick people.
- Staying home if you are sick with an influenza-like illness until at least 24 hours after you are free of fever (100° F [37.8°C]), or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.

Get vaccinated with the seasonal flu vaccine when it becomes available in early fall and also with the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. The health center will offer both vaccines and will send out notices.

If you develop flu-like symptoms (high fever, cough, runny nose, body aches, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea), and/or have concerns regarding management issues, please contact your personal doctor for consultation before presenting there in person. Health care professionals are in the best position to determine if you need influenza testing or treatment. Persons with certain underlying health issues may be at greater risk so please consult your personal physician for guidance.

In general, if you are not experiencing high fever, difficulty breathing, chest pain, persistent vomiting, severe diarrhea or instability related to dehydration, you will be advised as to how you can manage symptoms with home care.

The [Schiffert Health Center](#) will be recommending that students stay home (or in their room) if they are sick with an influenza-like illness until they are fever-free for 24 hours as noted above. We are asking that instructional faculty be flexible with regards to class attendance if students notify them that they are experiencing flu or flu-like symptoms.

For the most up-to-date information and travel advisories, I recommend monitoring the [World Health Organization](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [Virginia Department of Health](#) websites. The [Schiffert Health Center](#) has also posted useful information and resources.

All of us at the [Schiffert Health Center](#) will do our best to ensure the health and well-being of the students so that they may achieve academic success at VA Tech.

Sincerely,

Kanitta Charoensiri, D.O., M.B.A.
Director
Schiffert Health Center