If You Do Get Sick...

Activate the Personal Influenza Plan you made at the beginning of the semester.

Take your temperature. If you have a fever (100°F/37.8°C or higher), you must stay home from work and class until you have been completely fever-free (without fever-reducing medication) for at least 24 hours, and you feel well. For most people, this will be 3 to 5 days.

If you have a “high-risk” medical condition (listed on other page), call your health care provider. Although antiviral medications are not recommended for most healthy individuals, they are recommended for some “high-risk” cases and should be taken as soon as possible.

Most people recover fully on their own without medical treatment. Drink fluids to stay hydrated, get plenty of rest, eat what you can, and use ibuprofen and acetaminophen, as directed, to manage fever and body aches. (Antibiotics do not have any effect because influenza is caused by a virus.) Call a health care provider if your symptoms are not improving after 3 to 4 days. Seek immediate medical attention if you experience any of the symptoms listed in the chart below.

Go to your recuperation location. People with flu generally feel weak, achy, and fatigued for a few days to a week. Some people will be able to go to a nearby relative’s home to recuperate. This is strongly recommended for students living in University Housing; if you can relocate without using public transportation, please do so. If you will be staying in a household you share with others, avoid sharing common spaces with them while you’re sick. If you live alone, call a friend to bring supplies to your door rather than going shopping.

Try to stay in one room with the door closed. If someone is helping care for you, make sure that person does not have a “high-risk” condition, and always wear a surgical mask or bandanna over your face while that person is in the room with you. If possible, use a separate bathroom while you are sick. Whenever you leave your room, use hand sanitizer before exiting, and keep your mouth covered until you are back in your room. Everyone in the household should wash their hands well and often and use disposable disinfectant wipes on high-touch shared surfaces, such as doorknobs, bathroom faucets, and refrigerator handles. (See Cleaning Recommendations for Households and Individual Rooms, available at flu.wisc.edu.)

Communicate. Cancel any appointments (with your advisor, dentist, etc.), and contact your professors, TAs, and employer to let them know you have influenza symptoms and cannot return to class or at work until you’re better (including fever-free). As with any illness, you will be responsible for getting class notes you have missed and making arrangements to make up work after you recover. All faculty are being alerted that students are supposed to stay home if they are sick; and they are being asked to stay home from teaching if they get the flu.

Tell your “close contacts” you may have flu. That means roommates/housemates androommates. Also, any friends, lab partners, etc., that you spent time with in the 24 hours before you started to feel sick. That way, if any of them has a “high-risk” health condition, they can contact their healthcare provider for advice and possibly medication.

Self-Isolate. You should not go to the library, the Union, the SHERF, the NAT, restaurants, or any social events, and you should avoid public transportation. If you go out, cover your nose and mouth with a surgical mask, bandanna, or tissues; and shield others from coughs and sneezes.

Flu viruses typically survive on surfaces for 2 to 8 hours, so do not share towels, clothing, eating utensils, keyboards, remote controls, etc., while you are infectious. Standard cleaning products should be sufficient to remove virus from surfaces, but water alone is not enough.

When you recover, wash your own sheets and towels. Empty your wastebasket of used tissues, etc., and take out the trash yourself.

The good news? If the thing that made you sick was H1N1, you can’t get it again. But you can still catch colds, seasonal influenza, and other flu-like illnesses, so keep up the hand washing! Because you won’t necessarily know which virus made you sick, seasonal and H1N1 vaccination are still recommended.

Seek immediate medical attention if you develop any of the following:

- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Chills or shaking with a fever
- New or worsening headache
- Confusion or sudden dizziness
- Sudden pain or pressure in the chest or stomach
- Flu symptoms that improve or return
- Sudden dizziness with fever and/or severe cough

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), advice current as of August 19, 2009