I’M SICK.

HOW AND WHEN TO ACCESS CARE

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines influenza-like illness this way: A fever of 100.4°F or greater, plus a cough or sore throat and possibly other symptoms like runny nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, vomiting or diarrhea. Fever is often a key factor, although it is not always present.

Most people who get the flu can recover in a week or less with little or no medical attention, even if it feels pretty miserable. Bed rest, plenty of fluids, monitoring and treatment of symptoms with over-the-counter medications can provide relief and contribute to recovery. However, when in doubt, call the NYU Student Health Center (212) 443-1000 or your personal healthcare provider.

If you are pregnant or have any chronic illness, you’re at greater risk for complications, so please call the Student Health Center (212) 443-1000 or your personal healthcare provider. After hours medical advice is also available by calling the Student Health Center at (212) 443-1000.

If you experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care by calling 911 or NYU Public Safety at (212) 998-2222:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

SELF CARE:

If you become ill, appropriate self-care will be essential to recovering without complications. Good self-care practices can also help protect the health and well-being of others.

- **Stay home.** Do not go to class, work, or social events. Stay in and rest up until your fever is gone for a full day (24 hours) without the use of fever-reducing medicine. This will protect others from catching your illness.
- **Monitor your temperature.**
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Dehydration can increase headaches and fatigue.
- **Rest as much as possible.** If you must study while you are sick, take frequent breaks and naps; you will be able to return to your usual schedule sooner if you rest while you’re sick.
- **Practice good personal hygiene to prevent the spread of flu to others.** See the tips here.
SYMPTOM RELIEF

There are many over-the-counter medications that can help you through the worst symptoms of flu. Here are some suggestions.

FEVER, BODY ACHES, MILD HEADACHE:
- If you have a fever of greater than 100.4°F, take acetaminophen or ibuprofen (fever reducers) as per the label directions. These medications may also help with mild headache and body aches.
- **WARNING!** People under 19 years of age should not take aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid-containing products) if they have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye’s syndrome.

STUFFY NOSE:
- Nasal decongestants (pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine) can help with a stuffy nose. Note that some decongestants are paired with an antihistamine (e.g., diphenhydramine, doxycyclamine) which can cause drowsiness.
- Nasal decongestant sprays (e.g., oxymetazoline nasal, phenylephrine nasal) should only be used for a maximum of 3 days to avoid a side effect called "rebound congestion."
- Saline nasal mist or drops can be used to relieve nasal mucous membrane dryness and congestion.

COUGH/CHEST CONGESTION:
- Over-the-counter cough medications containing guaifenesin act as expectorants, thinning and loosening mucus and congestion in your lungs and throat. Dextromethorphan is a cough suppressant that can help if you have a dry cough or a cough that is preventing you from sleeping.

MULTI SYMPTOM COLD MEDICATIONS:
- Using these products (e.g., Dayquil, Nyquil, Theraflu) can result in your taking more medications than you actually need, so it is important that you read the label or ask your pharmacist for help choosing the right product for your symptoms. Keep in mind that most of these preparations contain acetaminophen and you should not take additional doses of acetaminophen when taking them.

IMPORTANT: Please consult the label on any medication prior to use for proper dosing. Do not take multiple over the counter medications without consulting a pharmacist or medical provider. Also, If you have any allergies, please let your provider or pharmacist know before taking any medication.

CLASS ABSENCES:
If you miss class because you are ill, please contact your instructors directly to request an accommodation. In addition, please also notify your academic adviser. The Student Health Center does not provide medical excuse notes.