

The NYU Community and Swine Flu

*Email Direct to the New York University Community from
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At NYU, much of our activity is collective: studying together, working together, playing sports together – these interactions with one another help define us as a community. With the spread of swine flu, we need to be somewhat more thoughtful than we would normally be about group activity, and we need to be mindful of how to keep ourselves well and our responsibilities to others in the community to reduce the likelihood of the spread of the flu. While we have not had any reported cases in the NYU community to date, there have been reports of probable cases in other universities, so I am writing you today to provide you with advice for your well-being and that of the University community.

The Student Health Center (SHC) is closely monitoring the recent reports of human cases of swine flu throughout the world. While, as I mentioned, there have been no cases of swine flu at NYU, the SHC will continue to work with federal and local public health agencies and NYU administration to allow NYU to be as proactive as possible in addressing this public health issue.

As of today, the most wide-spread swine flu activity is in Mexico. As a result, NYU strongly recommends against travel to Mexico until further notice. Currently, there is a U.S. travel advisory warning against nonessential travel to Mexico (see www.cdc.gov/travel). Please consult www.cdc.gov/travel for the latest U.S. travel advisory updates.

There is no vaccine available currently to protect against swine flu and according to the CDC, vaccination for seasonal influenza is unlikely to be effective for prevention of swine influenza. There are, however, everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
 - Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
 - If tissues are unavailable, cover your cough or sneeze with your upper arm, and not your hands, if you can avoid it.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
 - Try to avoid close contact with sick people. This may mean limiting your social interactions as well as participation in study groups.

In addition to keeping ourselves safe, we each have a responsibility to keep the community healthy as well. So, if you do become ill with influenza-like symptoms - including fever, body aches, cough, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea -- you should stay home or stay in your residence hall and drink lots of fluids, rest, and use Tylenol for fever. If the symptoms do not improve within 3 days, or you have a chronic health condition such as asthma or diabetes, or if you are particularly worried about your symptoms, call the NYU Student Health Center at (212) 443-1000 or contact your personal health care provider. If you are sick, do not go to class (including study groups) or to work. You should stay at home or in your residence hall and avoid contact with other people as much as possible (including parties and other social interactions) to keep from spreading your illness to others. If you experience any of the following warning signs...

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

... seek emergency medical care by calling 911 or NYU Public Safety at (212) 998-2222.

Individuals sick with an influenza-like illness have a responsibility to minimize the risk of infecting other individuals and should consider the following:

- Contact with others should be limited as much as possible; avoid close contact such as kissing, do not share toothbrushes, cigarettes, or drinks with others.
- Persons living in the home or residence hall with you should limit contact with you to the extent possible.
- Consider designating one person (not someone who is pregnant) as the primary person who will assist you while you are sick.
- If you are having symptoms, stay in a room separate from the common areas of the house or residence hall or suite. (For example, a spare bedroom, if that's possible.). If this is not possible, use a facemask or an N95 respirator type mask. These can be purchased at a pharmacy or hardware type store.
- ALWAYS cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose and ALWAYS wash your hands with soap or water or use alcohol-based hand rubs after coughing or sneezing or throwing a used tissue in the garbage. Throw out your used tissues with your regular garbage.
- Do not touch your nose, face, or eyes after coughing or sneezing.

The University is continuing to monitor the situation closely and will keep you informed of any developments that affect the NYU community. Please take care of yourselves and please feel rest assured that we are here to help.

For updates and additional information visit:

NYU Student Health Center's Swine Flu Web page
<http://www.nyu.edu/shc/about/news-swineflu.html>

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:
http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general_info.htm

New York City Department of Health and Mental Health:
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cd/cd-swineflu.shtml>

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