

Flu FAQs for Faculty

How is the University communicating information regarding swine flu and UConn's response to it?

The University will immediately announce new information or news regarding swine flu via campus-wide e-mails and/or through updates on the University's dedicated H1N1 page, found at FLU.UCONN.EDU.

What should I do to prepare for a potential H1N1 outbreak at UConn?

First, do your best to avoid getting sick through the practices described in the answer below to the question about how to avoid the flu.

Second, have a plan for how you would maintain your research program in the event that you become ill and/or those in your research group become ill. Think about what it is possible to bring home or have at home electronically if you cannot come into campus. If your research must be conducted on campus, as in a lab, please make sure that you and your research group have a means of communication and a plan in place for accomplishing critical tasks in case multiple members of your research group are out for several days.

Third, have a plan for your classes. How will you communicate with your department head or her/his designee if you cannot come to class? Do you have substitutes lined up and do they have access to the materials needed for that day's class? If, rather than substitutes, you prefer to or must use electronic means for classwork, please consult this website to see how you can use HuskyCT and other means to keep up with classwork electronically:

http://www.irc.uconn.edu/Vista_Help_Files/huskyct_pandemic.pdf.

Should I require "sick notes" from Student Health Services or a doctor from students who claim illness as an excuse for missing class or exams or handing in work late?

The Center for Disease Control recommends that students with "swine flu" self-isolate and limit the spread of the flu. The CDC also recommends that we "Do not require a doctor's note to confirm illness or recovery. Doctor's offices may be very busy and may not be able to provide such documentation in a timely way." Our Student Health Services Center is asking Storrs students who are ill, rather than going immediately to SHS, to "call the Student Health Services Advice Nurse at (860) 486-3427. Calling the Advice Nurse first may give you all the self-care information you need without having to visit Student Health Services. The Advice Nurse is available by phone 24 hours a day during the academic year."

Consequently, this semester, Student Health Services will not be providing "Verification of Visit to Health Services" forms for students to take to faculty for missing class due to illness. Students will still be expected to make up work that they missed. For the same reasons, do not ask students (this is relevant to regional faculty as well) to provide a "doctor's note" from a facility external to UConn. Decisions about how to handle final exams and excuses will be made closer to finals when we know what the situation is like at that time.

Will classes be canceled in the event of an outbreak?

The University will carefully monitor any outbreak of the flu and share information and recommendations. If a flu outbreak becomes severe, the University will work in conjunction with the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control to determine whether it is appropriate to cancel classes for a period of time or take other measures. If classes are canceled, do not attempt to hold yours, on off or campus, since that will help spread the illness. Instead use electronic means of communication and keep with classwork as suggested at this website:

http://www.irc.uconn.edu/Vista_Help_Files/huskyct_pandemic.pdf.

Can I as a faculty member cancel my classes?

Do what you normally would if you were ill or had a family or other emergency. Contact your department head or her/his designee. Either have a back-up plan with a substitute or substitutes to conduct the classes or use

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electronic means like HuskyCT to communicate with students and keep up with the work if you must cancel class.

http://www.irc.uconn.edu/Vista_Help_Files/huskyct_pandemic.pdf.

As a department head, what should I do about classes in the event of an outbreak of swine flu at UConn?

Ascertain that every faculty member has a plan for her/his class in the event of her/his illness. Make sure that the plans are readily available to all those who need them, particularly those designated as substitute instructors or TAs if a faculty member plans to use substitutes rather than electronic means such as HuskyCT.

If I see that a student is sick but is still coming to class, what should I do?

Advise all students that if they are not feeling well, they should not be in class and ask them to call the Student Health Services Advice Nurse at (860) 486-3427. Calling the Advice Nurse first may give them all the self-care information they need without having to visit Student Health Services. The Advice Nurse is available by phone 24 hours a day during the academic year. Advise regional campus students to telephone their health care providers.

What does the University advise employees to do to avoid the flu?

Practice respiratory etiquette – cough and sneeze into tissues, your arm or elbow, not into your hands. Stay at least six feet away from others if you or others are coughing or sneezing.

Practice good hand washing techniques – wash hands often with soap and water, especially after sneezing or coughing; wash your hands thoroughly for between 20 and 30 seconds.

Use hand sanitizers – when soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Purchase a hand sanitizer and carry it with you.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth as this easily spreads germs.

Stay healthy – get plenty of sleep; exercise appropriately; manage your stress; eat nutritious foods; and drink plenty of liquids.

Get a yearly flu shot and watch for information about the availability of the H1N1 vaccine.

Avoid contact with others who are ill.

What should I do if I become ill?

Symptoms of the flu include fever, muscle aches, headache, cough and runny nose. If you have these symptoms, stay home from work and avoid contact with others. Consult with your healthcare provider. Do not return to work until you have fully recovered, meaning more than 24 hours without a fever without the use of fever-reducing medication. Contact your students and your department head or dean and inform them that you are ill and will not be in.

Will vaccinations be available for students, faculty and staff?

The federal government anticipates distributing H1N1 vaccine to healthcare providers beginning in the mid-fall. UConn Student Health Services will offer vaccinations (per the guidelines of the CDC) to students when the vaccine is received. Faculty and staff are asked to receive the vaccine from their private healthcare providers.

Should surgical masks be worn to help avoid getting the flu?

No. The CDC recommends that surgical masks be worn only by those who are ill to help prevent the spread of germs.