

Flu Update: Provost Communication to OUHSC, August 26, 2009

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has recently issued Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education for the academic year 2009-2010.

The OUHSC Influenza Task Force is taking appropriate preparedness actions and steps in accordance with the CDC guidance.

The upcoming flu season is different because of the need to deal with both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu. H1N1 flu, like seasonal flu, is spread from person to person mainly by coughing or sneezing, and sometimes by touching an object with flu virus on it and then touching the mouth or nose. The symptoms and severity of illness caused by H1N1 flu and seasonal flu are similar. The symptoms include fever, cough, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting.

All of us can help by taking the following basic personal steps to prevent transmission of the flu:

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and warm water for 15 to 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze.
2. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand gels are effective.
3. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the used tissue in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cover your cough or sneeze with your shirt sleeve.
4. Suspend courtesy hand-shakes and kisses during the flu season.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Preventing transmission of flu begins with each one of us making a commitment to take these personal steps.

The seasonal flu vaccination program offered through either Employee Health Services or Student Health Services will be made available as soon as the vaccine is received.

Please be assured that we will keep you informed of the campus preparations and the measures being taken to protect our students, faculty and staff. Further e-mail communication to the campus will be made as appropriate.

Additional information can be obtained from the Oklahoma State Department of Health phone line at 1-866-278-7134 between 8 am and 8 pm, or on-line at www.flu.gov