H1N1 (Swine) Flu Information

Benton County and Oregon State University are already experiencing cases of H1N1 infection this fall. At OSU we have worked closely with the Benton County Health Department and followed CDC guidelines in managing our response to this virus. While this strain of influenza is not as severe as public health officials originally thought earlier this year, it is highly contagious and it is important that all students, faculty and staff take precautions to lessen its spread and protect themselves and our community. As the situation evolves, it is important to consider the following:

- At present, in the United States, the great majority of people with swine flu have had a mild illness lasting about 2-3 days. A small number of people have been hospitalized and an even smaller number have died. These more severe cases have occurred in a younger population than we normally see with typical seasonal influenza. Symptoms are similar to seasonal flu with fever (>100), cough, sore throat and body aches. In some instances, there may also be nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

- The best prevention of any flu, including H1N1, is frequent hand washing and/or the use of hand sanitizers. Also, if you are ill with cough, it is important to “cover the cough” so as not to spread viruses.

- While the seasonal flu vaccine does not protect against H1N1, it is recommended that everyone receive it.

- H1N1 vaccine is currently in testing and production. When an H1N1 vaccine is available, Student Health Services will inform the campus of plans to administer it. Check for regular updates on availability at http://studenthealth.oregonstate.edu/swineflu.

- If you have an influenza-like illness you should self-isolate (i.e., stay away from others) in your home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities (fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Keep away from others as much as possible, to prevent the spread of illness.

- If you are ill and must leave your home, cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. A surgical mask can be helpful, but a tissue or other covering is also appropriate.

- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for a week or so. Store at least a few days’ worth of food, water, and household necessities:
  - Easy-to-prepare food (canned foods, soups, protein/granola bars, dried fruit, cereal, juice)
  - Tissues, laundry detergent, toilet paper, and alcohol-based hand rubs
  - Thermometer
  - One gallon of water per person per day
  - Non-prescription drugs such as pain relievers (ibuprofen, acetaminophen), cough and cold medicines, stomach remedies and anti-diarrheal medication, and fluids with electrolytes (such as sports drinks)

- If you have severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough, you should seek medical attention.

- Student Health Services does not issue medical excuses for students missing classes due to illness and has not done so for at least 15 years. CDC also recommends that schools and employers not require notes from students or employees.

- For additional information about H1N1, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm, http://alert.oregonstate.edu/h1n1 or http://studenthealth.oregonstate.edu/swineflu.