



H1N1 INFLUENZA (FLU) and INSTRUCTORS

WHAT IS H1N1 INFLUENZA?

The term pandemic influenza refers to a worldwide spread of a new influenza virus. The current virus of concern is the H1N1 virus. Because it is new, most people do not have immunity to it. It is a respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to those of seasonal flu.

HOW IS H1N1 INFLUENZA SPREAD?

It is believed that it spreads the same way as regular seasonal flu. Influenza and other respiratory infections go from person to person when germs released from coughing and sneezing enter the nose and / or throat. Germs can also rest on hard surfaces like counters and doorknobs, where they can be picked up on hands and transmitted to the respiratory system when someone touches their mouth and/or nose.

WHEN WILL THE PANDEMIC BEGIN?

The pandemic officially started on June 11, 2009 when the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the pandemic.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The symptoms of H1N1 influenza include a sudden fever of 38°C (100.4°F) or higher, a cough and one or more of the following: sore throat, muscle aches, joint pain, headaches or physical exhaustion / fatigue. In some cases, these symptoms are accompanied by nausea, vomiting and / or diarrhea. The symptoms could persist for two (2) to seven (7) days, which depends on the individual and the severity. In extreme cases individuals are hospitalized and even ventilated for up to one (1) month.

HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF AND OTHERS?

The Province of Manitoba through the Manitoba Health and Health Living (MHHL) recommends the following precautions:

- Cover your cough by coughing into your elbow or sleeve or use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Reduce the spread of germs by limiting touching your eyes, nose or mouth and by washing your hands frequently.
- Maintain your health by taking care of yourself and those in your care including eating a healthy balanced diet, avoiding cigarette smoke and other harmful substances, being active and getting enough rest and sleep.

AS AN INSTRUCTOR, HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR A PANDEMIC?

Instructors are encouraged to consider the following:

- Consult your Faculty's pandemic preparedness plan for direction and guidance.
- Identify alternate methods of communicating with students and providing course material and communicate this to your students.
- Identify alternatives for making up assignments and taking examinations and communicate this to your students.



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- Identify alternate instructors should the instructor of record become ill. Communicate with your department head.
- Encourage students to keep up with school work so they will not have as much to make up. (i.e. students should identify a Study Buddy to take notes if they are ill).
- Remind students to visit www.umanitoba.ca/pandemic to read student related information.

WHAT SHOULD I, THE INSTRUCTOR, DO IF I GET SICK?

If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, you should:

- Stay home from work and limit unnecessary contact with others.
- Notify your department head to take appropriate action.
- Contact your health-care provider or visit your nearest health-care centre if you are concerned that you may need care – especially if your symptoms are severe or worsening (e.g. shortness of breath, dehydration, or worsening fever, cough or weakness).

Should major disruptions to University activities occur as a result of a pandemic, the course content, marks breakdown and other provisions in course outlines may be adjusted as the circumstances warrant, as determined by the appropriate body.

For personal advice on self-care or when to seek further care, those who cannot contact their primary health-care provider can phone Health Links—Info Santé at any time at 788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

WHAT CAN INSTRUCTORS DO FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ILL?

Instructors can:

- Ask students to stay home if they have flu-like symptoms and to keep you informed of when they will return.
- Encourage students to immediately notify you by email in the event of illness so that arrangements for makeup work can begin.

CAN AN INSTRUCTOR ASK A STUDENT TO LEAVE A CLASS?

Yes, if a student has influenza symptoms you can ask the student to leave the class and not return until his or her symptoms are gone. If this occurs you are encouraged to reasonably accommodate and be flexible to allow the student to complete the course work/exams.

CAN AN INSTRUCTOR INFORM THE ENTIRE CLASS OF A STUDENT ILLNESS?

An entire class does not need to be notified. All people should exercise H1N1 prevention efforts and self-monitor for symptoms, whether on campus or in the community, and whether they know someone with H1N1 infection or not, as long as flu activity is being reported in the community.

DO STUDENTS NEED DOCTOR VERIFICATION TO HAVE ABSENCES EXCUSED?

No not normally. However, students do need to inform their instructors of their absence. Instructors should rely on their best judgment if students ask for special dispensation related to missing academic work because of a flu-like illness. Instructors should also note that it is highly unlikely for the same student to contract H1N1 influenza then recover and then contract H1N1 influenza again.



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WHAT LATITUDE DO INSTRUCTORS HAVE TO CANCEL / SUSPEND CLASSES?

In consultation with the department head, an individual instructor may find it necessary to cancel individual classes. But the decision to cancel or suspend the entire term of classes is an institutional decision made by the Senate, not an individual instructor.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- Faculty specific instructions will be coordinated and communicated through faculty dean's offices.
- Internet resources include:
 - U of M pandemic planning web site: www.umanitoba.ca/pandemic.
 - Province of Manitoba: www.gov.mb.ca/flu.
 - Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC): www.fightflu.ca.