

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Influenza A (H1N1) for Full and Part time Faculty and Staff

This document will be updated as additional questions come to our attention. Please revisit it regularly. Student Employees should seek guidance from appropriate student services units.

1. Where can I find the latest information about Influenza A (H1N1) and the situation at the University of Connecticut and its campuses?

- FLU.UCONN.EDU

The University of Connecticut continues to communicate regularly with Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health to provide updated advisories and follow the latest information on H1N1 Influenza A prevention and treatment recommendations. Since recommendations are being revised frequently, members of the university community are advised to visit the following websites for information on prevention, self care, treatment and the status of local and national efforts to address the disease.

- [CT Flu Watch](#) (Connecticut Department of Public Health)
- [H1N1 Flu \(Swine Flu\) and You](#) (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention)
- [Influenza A \(H1N1\)](#) (World Health Organization)
- [CDC Guidance for Colleges and Universities](#)

2. What are the symptoms of Influenza A (H1N1)?

Influenza A (H1N1) symptoms include:

- Fever (greater than 100 degrees), chills
- Sore throat, headache, cough
- Body aches, fatigue
- Possible diarrhea and vomiting

If you do not have a fever greater than 100 degrees and a cough and/or sore throat, you do not have the flu. If you have any of these symptoms, you are strongly encouraged to contact your primary care physician. To protect yourself, you should practice good hygiene, including frequent hand washing, covering your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue or with your sleeve if you cough or sneeze, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.

3. What should I do if I develop influenza symptoms?

To limit the potential for exposure to other people, if you have a fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit and a cough, **do not** come to work. Take the following actions:

- Notify your supervisor that you are ill and will not be able to work
- Isolate yourself to keep from potentially exposing other people
- Seek medical advice from your primary care physician

4. When can I return to work if I have had Influenza A (H1N1)?

To minimize the potential exposure to others, it is very important that you do not return to work until 24 hours after you have been fever free (below 100 degrees Fahrenheit) without the use of ibuprofen or acetaminophen.

5. Are flu screenings available on campus for Faculty and Staff?

No. Faculty and Staff who are experiencing influenza-like symptoms are advised to contact their primary care physician for evaluation.

6. I have a staff member who has asked to wear a facemask when meeting with customers (students, employees, patients, visitors, etc.). I'm concerned that this may be off-putting to our customers. How do I respond?

The CDC does not recommend the use of surgical face masks by healthy people in public settings as a preventative measure. A mask over a healthy person's face may only provide them with a false sense of security: it does not protect their eyes or prevent them from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with contaminated hands. Generally, masks are recommended for use only by those who are sick to prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus to others when they sneeze or cough. They are also used by healthcare workers who are directly exposed to sprays of infectious droplets as they treat sick patients. Rather than using a facemask, the best control is to stay at least six feet away from people who are ill. When close contact (within 6 feet) with others cannot be avoided, individuals at high risk for serious complications from the flu should avoid people with flu-like illness (possibly by temporary reassignment). High risk individuals include those over age 65, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease, kidney disease, or a suppressed immune system.

7. I meet with customers, (students, employees, patients, etc.) frequently as part of my job responsibilities. What should I do if I encounter someone who is obviously sick?

As with other forms of the flu or contagious illnesses such as colds, maintaining a reasonable distance from the person is a starting point. Do not shake hands or make other physical contact. Offer the individual a mask if you have one or a tissue and ask the person to cover their mouth and nose if they should need to cough or sneeze. Use a disinfecting wipe after the person has left to wipe those areas of your work station that the person has touched.

8. What other work related steps can I take to avoid exposure to someone with the flu?

There may be situations in which the meeting can be rescheduled to a time when the person is feeling better or the business can be conducted by phone or e-mail. Do not hesitate to offer this suggestion if it is appropriate.

9. I have an employee who is ill and has come into work. I'm concerned about the potential for exposure to other people. Can I send this employee home?

Employees should be encouraged to stay home or go home if they are sick. The University does not generally send sick employees home, but these situations must be evaluated on a case by case basis. Contact Labor Relations at 860-486-5684 for advice if you have this situation. In addition, advise

employees of the basic preventative measures (practice good hygiene, including frequent hand washing, covering your nose and mouth with your sleeve if you cough or sneeze, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands) and post flu flyers throughout your work areas.

10. If an employee is not able to work due to illness, and does not have any paid sick time available, how will he/she be paid?

These situations will generally be governed by the relevant collective bargaining agreement. Typically, however, an employee will have alternative earned leave time (vacation, holiday, PL, compensatory time) that they may request to use to cover their absence.

11. May I choose to go home if I don't want to be exposed to a sick coworker who isn't sent home?

Yes, with supervisory approval you may leave work; however, you must use your own paid time off or, if you have exhausted your accruals, you may request an absence without pay.

12. I'm not sick, but I don't want to come to work for fear of becoming ill. Is my supervisor required to approve my request for time off?

You may request to take paid leave (vacation, PL, holiday, compensatory time); however, your supervisor is not required to approve your time off request. Requests will be approved as operating needs permit. It is important to educate yourself about the H1N1 virus and its transmission. Visit the web sites listed at the top of this FAQ document. You may have other rights in accordance with your collective bargaining agreement.

13. During the Influenza A (H1N1) outbreak, can my supervisor cancel my vacation time off request that has already been approved?

Yes, your supervisor has the authority to cancel any pre-approved vacation request, especially in circumstances where there are serious staff shortages as a result of illness. However, supervisors are advised to consider all of the circumstances (including, but not limited to the whether the employee has already purchased airline tickets, hotel reservations, etc.), and should only make the decision to cancel someone's vacation when absolutely necessary.

Your vacation also could be cancelled if you have been designated as emergency support personnel due to the nature of your job responsibilities. Emergency support personnel are presumed to be the same as those so designated for inclement weather purposes, unless modified. Department heads may change designations as conditions require.

14. My child's school (day care) is closed due to an incident of Influenza A (H1N1), and my child is not sick. I have no other child care arrangements. Can I bring him to work with me, or if I must stay home with him, how will I be paid?

Promptly notify your supervisor of the reason for your absence and your anticipated return to work date. In the event of a school closing due to the flu, employees may not bring their children into work. If you have no alternate childcare arrangements and must stay home, you may have several different options, although not all options will be available in all situations depending upon the

nature of your job responsibilities. For example, most employees will be able to use sick leave, vacation and/or compensatory time, consistent with your collective bargaining agreement, or may request an absence without pay consistent with University guidelines.

15. If classes are cancelled but the campus is not closed, what options are available for me if I do not want to work?

If your unit is open and you do not want to come to work, you may request to take paid leave consistent with your collective bargaining agreement. However, your supervisor is not required to approve your request for time off. Requests will be approved based on operating needs. If your paid leave balances are exhausted, you may request an unpaid voluntary leave of absence consistent with University guidelines. It is important to educate yourself about the H1N1 virus and its transmission. Visit the University's emergency preparedness Web sites listed at the top of this document.

16. If the entire campus is closed due to an influenza outbreak, how will I be paid?

The same policy applied to other emergency closings will apply.

If the entire campus is closed, staff who are scheduled to work—but not *required* to work—during the hours the campus is closed are paid, and they do not have to charge the absence to accrued leave, except special payroll hourly employees, who are paid only for time worked. Staff who were not scheduled to work or were not at work because of such reasons as vacation, holiday, sick time, or leave of any type whether paid or unpaid, will continue in that status and their absence will be coded according to the particular reason for the absence.

17. I have been identified as emergency support personnel, and I am required to work when the campus is closed during an influenza outbreak. How will I be paid?

You will be paid consistent with your collective bargaining agreement, or, if management exempt or confidential, as you would normally be paid.

18. How do I know if I've been identified as emergency support personnel?

Your department should have notified you of your designation as emergency support personnel when you were hired into your current position, or may do so now. Department heads have been instructed to identify and inform their staff members if they are considered emergency support staff who would be required to work in this type of emergency situation.. Check with your supervisor if you are not sure.

19. I have an employee who has not previously been identified as emergency support personnel, but she will be required to work during an influenza outbreak. How do I designate her as an emergency support employee?

If you determine a business need and/or a staffing need, you may designate an employee as emergency support personnel for the purpose of flu response or other medical emergency situation, consistent with the University's Emergency Closing Procedure.

http://www.hr.uconn.edu/emerg_closing_proc.html

Managers should give employees as much advance notice as possible if they are going to be designated emergency support personnel for medical emergencies.

20. If I haven't been identified previously as an emergency support personnel employee, but my supervisor asks me to work, how will I be paid?

Support and Service Staff employees who are *required* to work when the campus is closed due to an influenza outbreak will be paid in accordance with their collective bargaining agreement, if applicable. If any additional compensation is approved, affected employees will be notified.

21. I have an employee who is not designated as emergency support personnel and was not required to work. He was not aware the campus was closed, and he came into work. What should I do?

If the campus is closed, all those who are not required to work must be sent home. Remind employees of the different avenues that the University uses to disseminate emergency closing information. Employees will be paid for the day without charging the absence to paid-time-off hours. (This does not apply to temporary/special payroll employees who are only paid only hours actually worked.)

Please refer to the Emergency Closing Procedures for more information:

http://www.hr.uconn.edu/emerg_closing_proc.html

22. I have an employee who was identified as emergency support personnel, but she did not report to work when needed. What can I do?

Assuming the employee is aware of the expectations of this designation, the manager should discuss the matter with the employee to find out the reasons for the employee's absence. If you are not satisfied with the employee's answer, contact Labor Relations for more information.

23. Can I come to work even though the campus is closed?

Closing the campus is an exceptionally rare event that occurs only in extreme circumstances. It is a decision that is made to protect the health and safety of faculty, staff, and students. Do not come to work unless you have been identified as emergency support personnel and are being required to come to work in an emergency closing situation.

24. I have a temporary/special payroll appointment and I am paid on an hourly basis. How will I be paid when the campus is closed due to an influenza outbreak?

Temporary and special payroll employees who are paid on an hourly basis are only paid for hours worked.

25. Can my supervisor schedule me to work hours or shifts that I normally do not work?

Yes, you may be asked to work more hours or different hours than normal, especially if you have been designated as emergency support personnel or the University is short staffed as a result of the

influenza outbreak. Managers will attempt to provide advance notice if possible. All changes in work schedules will be consistent with collective bargaining agreements.

26. If there is a large number of employees who are unable to come to work because of the influenza outbreak, is there a maximum number of overtime hours my supervisor can require me to work?

In the event of a serious influenza outbreak, we all may be needed to work differently to ensure the University continues to function. You may be asked to work more hours or different hours than normal, especially if you have been designated as emergency support personnel or the University is short staffed as a result of the influenza outbreak. Maximum hours and rest periods will be afforded consistent with collective bargaining agreements, wage and hour laws, and applicable State Laws.

27. What assistance is available to me to help me cope with the emotional impact of an influenza outbreak?

The University provides resources to help employees cope with these types of life events through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Call 860-679-2877 or 800-852-4392 (Connecticut toll-free) (24 hours a day, 365 days a year). The EAP provides confidential, short-term counseling at no cost to the employee.

28. Will my State of Connecticut sponsored healthcare plan cover medical expenses associated with treatment for influenza?

Employees who have questions about what is covered under the health care plan should contact the carriers directly. Contact information is available on your medical and prescription drug ID cards. More information may be found at the following link to information provided by the Office of the State Comptroller.

<http://www.osc.state.ct.us/empret/indxhlth.htm>

Please check back regularly for updates!