

Flu Season has Started. Are you Ready?

The flu season has started and will last through the fall and winter. We have seen cases of influenza A at the health center and we expect to see more as the virus spreads and circulates in our community. It's common for more than one kind of flu virus to spread during the flu season.

If you haven't already gotten your flu shot, it's not too late. The flu vaccine is the number one way you can protect yourself from catching the flu this year. Also, it's important to cover your coughs and sneezes and wash your hands often with soap and water (especially before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing your nose). Use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available. If possible, avoid touching your face and don't share cups or utensils.

Controlling the spread of flu virus

If you get the flu, you can get sick and can spread the flu to others at home, in the classroom, and in the community. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

We are asking that you plan to stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

For students, this means not attending classes and not visiting dining centers. We understand that this may create an increased burden for make-up work and exams; however, our goal is to prevent the spread of the flu as much as possible in an environment that is very conducive to contagious illnesses. We are asking professors for flexibility with attendance and class work. Flu is highly contagious, and self-isolation is important to help control its spread. At the time of their appointment, Schiffert Health Center provides students [visit documentation](#) which serves as an official document similar to absence verification from the Dean of Students.

Managing your illness

Unless you are experiencing severe symptoms or have underlying medical conditions such as diabetes or asthma, you may not need to visit the health center. Instead, please call Schiffert Health Center at 540-231-6444 if you have concerns about symptoms or questions about managing your illness.

Most young, otherwise healthy adults suffer no severe outcomes of flu other than the misery of symptoms for about a week. We recommend symptom treatment with acetaminophen or ibuprofen, decongestants, and plenty of rest and fluids. Anti-viral medications (such as Tamiflu) are usually not necessary unless symptoms are severe or other conditions such as diabetes, asthma, or immunosuppression exist.

For more resources on how to care for yourself at home if you have flu-like symptoms visit our [website](#).

Your cooperation helps to keep all Hokies healthy!