



## STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

Dear students, faculty and staff,

Welcome to a new academic year! As we begin fall semester with the excitement of new students, new professors, new classes, and new adventures... we also face the challenge of a new virus! There has been a great deal of media attention concerning the novel H1N1 or "Swine Flu" virus. We wanted to update you on the steps the university is taking in preparing for the H1N1 virus.

For many years, UNR has had an Emergency Operations Team in place to address wide ranging campus issues and health concerns. This team has been actively engaged in preparation efforts to respond to the H1N1 pandemic. A Pandemic Flu Plan was created in 2006 and updated this year. A Pandemic Flu Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from Student Affairs, Student Health, Police, Housing, Communications, and facilities is meeting weekly to address and plan for campus needs. Cases of H1N1 have already occurred on many college campuses. We anticipate that we will see cases on our campus this semester and would like to update you on the latest information. We need all of your help in our prevention efforts!

**What we know about H1N1:** This is a new strain of the flu virus. The first cases of the H1N1 flu were identified in Mexico in April 2009 and it has since spread quickly throughout the world. So far, the severity of this virus does not appear to be much different than the seasonal flu. However, we can expect to see many more cases as few of us will have immunity to this virus. This virus appears to be more frequent in children and young adults than the seasonal flu.

**Symptoms of the Flu:** This is a respiratory illness with symptoms including: fever greater than 100 degrees, headache, fatigue, sore throat, cough, runny or congested nose, and body aches. In some individuals, diarrhea and vomiting may also occur.

**How the Flu Spreads:** The flu spreads in respiratory droplets when people who are infected cough or sneeze. The flu virus can live for up to 8 hours on surfaces and can also be spread by touching surfaces with influenza virus on it and then touching eyes, nose, or mouth. Individuals are contagious for 1 day prior to the development of symptoms and up to 24 hours after fever has resolved.

**Steps to help prevent the spread of the flu:** Wash your hands frequently, cover your coughs and sneezes, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, and don't share food, drink, or utensils. If you live with other students, frequently clean commonly used surfaces such as doorknobs, keyboards, and bathroom areas. Try to avoid close contact with sick people. If you are ill with flu like symptoms, stay home until 24 hours after your fever is gone. Eat well, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly!

**Vaccination:** Getting vaccinated is one of the best ways to protect yourself against the flu. This year, there will be a vaccine for the seasonal flu as well as two additional vaccines for the H1N1 flu. These vaccines will be available sometime in the fall. We will have updates when the vaccines are available.

**Antivirals:** Antiviral medication is available for use in certain circumstances such as in severe or hospitalized cases of the flu. These medications are not a cure for the flu, but may be helpful for those who have other chronic conditions such as heart disease, asthma, lung conditions, immune deficiencies, or in pregnant women or young children. Antiviral medications are not given to all people with the flu because most people get better on their own and overuse can promote resistant viruses.

**Treatment:** The majority of the individuals infected with this virus will not need to seek a doctor's care. Self care with fluids, rest, Tylenol or ibuprofen (no aspirin) may be all that is needed. Faculty, staff, or students who are ill with the flu should stay home (or in their dorm room) for 24 hours after they are fever free without the use of fever reducing medications. A mild cough may persist; however, the cough should not prevent students from returning to class. Pregnant women, young children, and those with diabetes, asthma, heart disease, or immune deficiencies with flu like symptoms should consult a physician or the Student Health Center. Anyone having symptoms such as difficulty breathing, chest or abdominal pain, sudden dizziness, confusion, or severe or persistent vomiting should seek emergency care.

**Class Activities:** We do not anticipate closure of the campus. The latest information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend school closures for cases of H1N1. However, the emergency response team at UNR will continue to monitor the campus situation, working closely with our local and state health divisions to make recommendations. Any decision to modify campus classes or activities would be made by the President of the university and would be communicated widely to all faculty, staff and students through email and other communications. Students who are ill with flu like symptoms should notify their professor right away.

**Residence Halls:** If possible, students with flu like illness who live in on campus housing should return home until 24 hours after their fever is gone. Students who remain on campus should remain in their rooms until 24 hours after their fever is gone and receive meals in their room. "Flu buddies" (dorm mates who are not ill) should be used to bring food to the ill student's room. Wearing a surgical mask when around roommates or other people should be encouraged.

**Next Steps:** As new information about H1N1 becomes available, we will provide updates via email and the university website. It is important that we as a campus are aware and informed, but not panicked about the H1N1 virus. Be assured that plans are in place to deal with this upcoming flu season. We can all do our parts to help prevent its spread. Check UNR and the Student Health Center websites for updates on H1N1 as the semester progresses. More information about H1N1 is available at the following websites: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1) [www.flu.nevada.gov](http://www.flu.nevada.gov) [www.unr.edu/shc](http://www.unr.edu/shc) [www.unr.edu/emergency/announcements.h1n1.html](http://www.unr.edu/www.unr.edu/emergency/announcements.h1n1.html)

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