

Dear Butler Community,

With the start of a new academic year just weeks away, Butler University Health Services would like to take this opportunity to update you on the H1N1 virus (formerly known as swine flu), as well as our work related to a possible occurrence here on campus.

As you may know, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared on June 11, 2009, that the H1N1 outbreak had reached pandemic levels. The pandemic designation does not mean that this virus has become more dangerous or more deadly. In fact, it is a relatively mild virus. The pandemic designation reflects that H1N1 is a new form of flu virus that spreads easily from human to human because people have no natural immunity to it.

As soon as the first human cases of the H1N1 infection became known, the WHO Collaborating Center in Atlanta began work on a vaccine. Although much progress has been made with the vaccine, federal health officials believe it will not be available until mid-fall and, at that time, would only be available to select populations: pregnant women; people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age; health care and emergency services personnel; persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years of age; and people ages 25 through 64 who are at higher risk because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

With the vaccine and decisions about its distribution still in process, proper personal hygiene remains the best measure to prevent infection or further spread of the H1N1 virus. Therefore, please continue to:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough and sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into your sleeve rather than your hand.
- Clean hands thoroughly with soap and water, or cleanse them with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer on a regular basis.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Improve airflow in your living or work space by opening windows.
- Practice good health habits including adequate sleep, drinking plenty of fluids, eating nutritious food and keeping physically active.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who might be ill.
- Wipe down surface areas with disinfectant spray and/or wipes on regular basis.
- If you're sick stay home for seven days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom free for 24 hours, whichever is longer.

Though H1N1 has not touched Butler University, we continue to closely monitor the updates and recommendations from various local, state and federal health organizations. Additionally, the University has followed all recommendations the CDC has provided for colleges and universities, such as tracking all students with flu-like symptoms.

According to the CDC, symptoms for H1N1 are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, running or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting.

Anyone who is experiencing these symptoms should seek medical advice. Butler students can call Health Services at (317) 940-9385. Faculty and staff should contact their family physician.

Thank you for your assistance in making sure the fall semester has a healthy start. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Health Services at 940-9385.

Vicky Rosa, RN MHA
Director, Health Services