

H1N1 Flu Update for CU Programs and Events

Awareness of the new H1N1 ("swine") flu is far more widespread than the illness itself; and that's good news in more ways than one. Though this flu spread quickly, the number of infected people is still low compared to seasonal flu, and most cases have been relatively mild. Health officials say the spread in the U.S. is slowing down as summer is heating up.

Meanwhile, publicity regarding the benefits of good personal hygiene has more of us covering coughs and washing hands. Public health authorities are encouraging those who are sick to stay home and get well, and the rest of us to go about life as usual.

What does this mean for upcoming events and programs?

At Cornell, we always enjoy summer events and programs. National, state, and local health department officials tell us there is NO reason to change our plans.

Event organizers, program planners, and facility managers should have a supply of hand sanitizing gels and wipes. Signs are available to print from the Gannett website to remind Cornellians and visitors of common sense measures to protect their own health and that of others ("Avoid the Flu"). We encourage all members of the Cornell community to be informed of the facts about H1N1 flu, aware of Cornell's efforts to protect the health and safety of the community, and committed to prevention measures.

What resources are available?

- H1N1 flu news, up-to-date personal and public health recommendations, and handouts and flyers to print: www.gannett.cornell.edu
- Cornell information and event updates: www.cornell.edu/emergency/flu
- E-mail address for questions, concerns, and suggestions: flu-info@cornell.edu
- New York State H1N1 Flu Hotline: 800 808-1987
- Phone consultation (24/7) with a Gannett Health Services provider: 607 255-5155
- Health care for students: Gannett Health Services, 607 255-5155
- Thermometers, hand sanitizer, cold and flu medications: Gannett Pharmacy, 607 254-6337

How prevalent is H1N1 flu in the Ithaca area?

H1N1 influenza has affected people throughout New York State, though the number of cases in this area continue to be relatively low.

However, due to the global spread of the illness, the World Health Organization has declared a pandemic. The term "pandemic" in the context of flu means a new virus that spreads widely. That virus does not have to cause severe disease to qualify. The pandemic declaration is a reflection of the spread of the H1N1 virus, not the severity of illness caused by H1N1.

Should individuals take special precautions?

The most important thing people can do is to put into practice now familiar personal health recommendations:

- Wash your hands with soap and water, or use hand sanitizers, frequently and carefully; cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or sleeve; wipe shared surfaces and items with disinfectant cleaners.
- If you become ill with flu-like symptoms, avoid being with others for 7 days or 24 hours after symptoms have passed.
- When uncertain about your health and possible infection with H1N1 flu, consult with a health care provider.

Why do some people wear masks?

People wear face masks for a variety of reasons, including allergies, respiratory issues, chronic cough, other health concerns, as well as anxiety about flu. (Wearing face masks is NOT recommended as an H1N1 flu prevention strategy for the general public.) Seeing people wearing masks can raise anxiety for others; so can sitting next to someone who is coughing frequently. Sharing information with visitors about the local experience with H1N1 might relieve some people's worries. For others, the Gannett website or phone line might be a good resource.



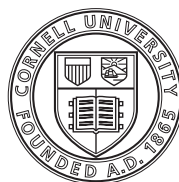
Most people who are coughing and sneezing in Ithaca these days are dealing with spring allergies and colds. If you have access to tissues, you can offer them. In some situations, you could offer water.

Individuals who have concerns about a coughing neighbor should feel free to move. A poster, entitled "Keep a Safe Distance," is available on the Gannett website to promote awareness of public health and safety.

If someone is not feeling well, whom should they call for advice?

Gannett Health Services can provide phone consultation (24/7) to assess symptoms and offer advice regarding self-care, pharmacies, and local health resources (e.g., Cayuga Medical Center's Convenient Care Center or Emergency Department). Information, contact numbers, maps, and transportation recommendations are available on the Gannett web site (search "Cayuga Medical Center"). Copies of maps to the hospital and Convenient Care Center also are available inside the front door of Gannett any time.

Students should call Gannett for advice or to schedule an appointment.



Summer Hours:	
Monday-Friday	8:30 am-4:30 pm
Weekends	building closed
e-mail: gannett@cornell.edu	
fax: 607-255-0269	
110 Ho Plaza, Ithaca, NY 14853-3101	