

Marist Health Services

Instruction Sheet for the Flu and Influenza-Like Illness (ILI)

Influenza-like Illness presents with a temperature greater than 100 degrees, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, headaches, body aches, chills and fatigue. It often has an **abrupt onset** and can be accompanied by nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. **Flu** presents the same way but is proven by positive nasal swab.

Flu/ILI is a self-limiting virus that although can be severe usually **lasts 3-5 days** and does not need any medical intervention for the healthy college student. Please call SHS with any concerns.

IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR THE FLU:

If you are high risk for complications to influenza: If you have heart disease, lung disease, asthma, diabetes, recent chemo or radiation therapy, on aspirin therapy, steroids or immunosuppressive medications, sickle cell disease or have had your spleen removed you should be evaluated by a health care professional and may be considered for antiviral medication.

Treatment:

- Stay home from school, work, sports and all public activities. **You are contagious.** If possible, go home and rest (*via private transportation*). Most healthy adults can infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms begin and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick. Therefore, you should continue these activity restrictions for 5 days.
- Wash hands frequently, cough into sleeve or tissue, and avoid coughing into your hands.
- Rest and drink plenty of clear fluids (water, Gatorade, ginger ale, herbal tea, apple juice). Avoid milk products.
- Students on meal plans can arrange for a friend or their RA to pick up “sick trays” from the cafeteria. Use your CWID to pick up a “To Go” container.

Medications:

- Antibiotics are not effective against the Flu.
- Antiviral medications can be used. These medications can lessen symptoms and shorten the time you are sick by 1 or 2 days. They can also help prevent serious complications. Taking these medications does not mean you are not contagious. You should still follow the same activity restrictions as listed above. Possible side effects of these medications include nausea, vomiting, dizziness, runny/stuffy nose, cough, diarrhea, headache, seizure and some behavioral effects. These medications are most effective when started within 2 days of becoming sick, but can be used later in certain situations. Follow instructions given to you regarding these medications.

- Over the Counter medications:
 - **For dry cough:** try Dextromethorphan.
 - **For wet cough and excessive mucus:** try Guaifenesin.
 - **For congestion:** try Phenylephrine.
 - **For aches and fever:** try Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)

Always read your labels and directions. Be aware of drug interactions if you're on daily medication. Be aware of the ingredients in combination cold medications in order not to overdose on Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen. Don't exceed twelve 325mg tablets (4000mg) per day of Acetaminophen or six 200mg tablets (1200mg) of Ibuprofen per day. Do not take Aspirin because there is a risk of Reye's Syndrome with viral illness in young people.

If your symptoms worsen or become severe: difficulty breathing, chest pain, persistent vomiting, vomiting blood, bloody stool, unexplained rash, confusion, severe weakness, please contact security at extension 2282.

If you are not improving after 36 - 48 hours, please contact Health Services.

Returning to school:

If you tested positive for the flu, you should follow the 5-day guideline. You should also be fever free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

If you did NOT test positive for the flu but were diagnosed with Influenza-Like Illness, you should be fever free for 24 hrs without medication before returning to school.

What should Roommates do? Marist does not have an infirmary for overnight care or housing for isolation. If ill students are not able to go home, roommates may temporarily relocate if possible. Students who need assistance with options can speak with their RA/RD.

Using antiviral medications for household contacts IS NOT advised unless those contacts have risk factors for high-risk complications. However, if any roommates or close contacts have symptoms, they are encouraged to seek care at Health Services for evaluation.

Prevention: Get a flu shot! Avoid close contact with others during Flu season. Wash hands frequently, pay particular attention to cleaning high traffic/high touch areas. Disposable antiseptic cleaning cloths from the drug store are convenient for cleaning key boards, door knobs, desks, etc. Students can contact the housekeeping department if needed.

Excuse Notes: Faculty has been advised that they should not require excuse notes for ill students. Students are responsible to communicate with professors regarding their illness and make up missed assignments. Open communication is pertinent. If a student misses 4 consecutive days of class due to illness or injury, CAAS should be contacted by the student or family member at 845-575-3500.

Please contact Student Health Services with any medical concerns 575-3270