



Guidance for UWA Management on H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu)

Current Situation

The symptoms of the H1N1 influenza (Swine Flu) virus in people appear to be similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and includes fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people afflicted have reported diarrhoea and vomiting.

Human Swine Flu is currently considered to be a mild illness in most people. Health Authorities are focusing on those who may be at risk of severe illness, testing will only be provided for people affected if they have underlying conditions. This may include pregnant women and people with underlying conditions including respiratory disease such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart disease, diabetes, renal disease, morbid obesity and weakened immune systems. These people are urged to seek medical attention if they have acute respiratory symptoms.

Antiviral medication will be limited to people with moderate or severe illness, or whose underlying conditions could make them vulnerable to the virus.

Advice to UWA Staff and Students

Staff and students are requested to:

- Monitor updates on this health threat. For general information on Swine Flu call 180 2007 and also refer to information and links on the UWA Swine Flu website.
- Reduce their risk of contracting or spreading influenza at all times through good personal hygiene and good etiquette when coughing, sneezing or when blowing a runny nose.
- If anyone has influenza symptoms they are advised to stay at home until well. Recovery time will vary with individuals and according to treatment. Staff should inform their supervisor using normal sick leave protocols. Students should inform their course co-coordinators or supervisors in the normal way.
- Telephone their doctor (GP) or healthdirect Australia on 1800 022 222 for further advice if they have a fever plus cough and/or sore throat and are concerned that they cannot self-manage their illness at home.

UWA Swine Flu website: <http://www.uwa.edu.au/swine-flu>

UWA Influenza Guidelines: http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/policies/influenza_guidelines

Staying at Home

Given the potential rapid spread of the influenza virus in the community, as a precautionary measure, the University is requesting staff and students who are experiencing flu-like symptoms to remain at home until recovered. A doctor will be able to advise an individual with a chronic condition on the risk of the complications of influenza.

Staying away from campus may cause disruption to work and/or studies. This disruption will be far greater if the University community experiences a major influenza outbreak. People need to be aware of the consequences to others.

Halls of Residence

The University Halls of Residence have response plans and have ascertained suitable quarantine areas.

Students - Standard Semester/Trimester Examinations

In the event that a student has contracted, or believes they may have contracted Swine Flu and they are needing to sit an exam, they are required to submit an 'Application for Special Consideration' with supporting documentation in the form of a medical report and any other relevant documentation (quarantine notices etc.) to their Faculty Office within three (3) University working days of the date of the examination in order to obtain a Deferred Examination. Rules and regulations for Special Consideration can be found in the 'Special Considerations Brochure'.

Combined degree students may submit the form through either relevant Faculty Office and forms can be submitted via e-mail, facsimile or postal services should the student still be ill at the time of submission. In the situation where the student is unable to obtain the required supporting documents by the submission deadline, they should contact the relevant Faculty Office for further advice.

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Special Considerations:

Brochure: http://www.studentservices.uwa.edu.au/ss/counselling/services_for_students?f=249762

Application: http://www.studentadmin.uwa.edu.au/_data/page/8581/Special_Consideration_Form.pdf.

Students - Deferred Examinations Period

As per standard Semester/Trimester Examinations students are required to submit an 'Application for Special Consideration' to the relevant Faculty Office. The University will endeavour to accommodate these students in the next available central examination period or to provide alternative forms of assessment.

Staff Sick Leave

For staff, the University Policy on staff absence on account of illness, injury or caring (sick leave) should be used to determine the nature of paid and unpaid leave for personal illness or injury, or to care or support a member of the employee's immediate family or household. This policy sets out leave accrual, eligibility criteria and other conditions that apply.

University Policy on staff absence on account of illness, injury or caring (sick leave):

<http://www.universypolicies.uwa.edu.au/search?method=document&id=UP07%2F222>

Travel

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provides updated travel advice to Australians. As Australian travellers in some countries are seen as a potential source of infection there have been flu screening and quarantine protocols introduced internationally, specifically for incoming flights from Australia. Some travellers may be prevented from further travel and quarantined. Staff and students are advised not to attempt to travel whilst sick or if they have a fever.

Vaccination against seasonal influenza at least two weeks prior to travel is still recommended, although the degree of protection against Swine Flu is not clear. Staff and students should consult their health care provider for travel medical advice and further guidance if they have specific concerns.

Returning or newly arriving travellers from areas where Swine Flu is prevalent should be monitored for flu symptoms and if demonstrating such symptoms requested by their supervisor to not attend campus until recovered.

DFAT Smarttraveller: <http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/>

UWA Travel Policy: http://www.finserv.uwa.edu.au/sp/travel/pol_procs/uwa_travel

Personal Protective Equipment – Face Masks

Masks are not generally recommended for well people at this stage. Masks are recommended for affected individuals. Patients can check with their doctor for current advice.

Exceptions are health care workers, and close contacts with someone infected. If students have specific concerns about exposure during a course (e.g. health student), the clinical supervisor or the OSH department associated with the placement should provide advice accordingly.

Gels and Hand Wipes

To date the Public Health advice is that good personal hygiene will suffice, however, areas in the University with specific concerns may supply gels and hand wipes based on the assessment of risk.

Business Continuity

During the peak seasonal flu period, and with the added potential impact of Swine Flu, many staff may not be able to attend work. Provision of alternative lecturers and tutors may be required. Planning for situations such as the sudden absence of a lecturer and flexible work arrangements should be considered in advance.

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For advice within the University - telephone Safety and Health on 6488 3938 or internal Ext. 3938.