



# The UNIVERSITIES

*at Shady Grove*

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September 2, 2009

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

Welcome to the fall 2009 semester at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG)! As the academic year begins, I write on behalf of the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) and the emergency preparedness committee, which has met to plan for a potential H1N1 flu outbreak, to alert you to the importance of proper precautions against the spread of H1N1 flu. We are taking several steps to educate our population, prevent the spread of the virus, and will work closely with our partner campuses to continue to provide service during anticipated periods of student, faculty and staff absenteeism.

As USG is a partnership campus, we are aware that many of the home campuses have developed web pages, information and procedures for H1N1 flu preparedness. ***Please remember that as we are located in Montgomery County, USG's response to pandemic flu is under the oversight of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.*** Thus, information about USG operations can be found through our emails and webpage.

USG's H1N1 plan can be found at <http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/h1n1>. As you may know, the H1N1 flu is widespread throughout the world. Fortunately, the vast majority of cases are mild and at this point appear no more severe than the seasonal flu. Cases of H1N1 have already appeared on most college campuses and we expect to see more cases this fall. People under 24 years old are expected to be more highly susceptible to the H1N1 virus.

In order to prepare for the possibility of illness and prevent the spread of the virus, there are some things you can do to be better prepared:

1) Create your own "Flu Kit" before any illness. Purchase non-aspirin fever-reducing medication (Tylenol, Advil, or similar brands), a thermometer, a decongestant, tissues, hand sanitizer, some surgical masks, soup, crackers, and decaffeinated tea or Gatorade type beverage.

Please note: Some people feel it necessary to wear masks when there is an outbreak of a virus. Please be aware it is most effective for those who are sick to wear a mask to keep from spreading germs through coughing and sneezing. Wearing a mask when you are well does little to keep you from catching a virus. Surgical masks should be available at your local pharmacy.

2) Get vaccinated for seasonal and H1N1 flu. USG is partnering with the Montgomery County Department of Health and University of Maryland, Baltimore's School of Nursing to offer seasonal flu shots at USG on November 12<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 to 7:00p.m. in the multipurpose room, SGII. Consider getting the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or

diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccination, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm>. There is a possibility that the H1N1 vaccine may be available during the USG flu clinic so please continue to watch for more information on this event.

3) Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective. In the near future, you will find hand sanitizing stations and health information posted around campus aimed at reducing the risk of infection.

4) Practice respiratory etiquette by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues into the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth; germs are spread this way.

5) Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius. Look for possible signs of fever: if the person feels very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.

If you do get the flu or flu-like illness

Don't go to class or work and stay home if you have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen, aspirin or acetaminophen).

Speak with your health care provider if you are at risk for complications. People at high-risk for flu complications should speak with their health care providers as soon as possible. People with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes), lowered immunity (such as cancer, HIV) and over age 65 are at greater risk. Anyone who experiences shortness of breath, increasing fever, chest pain or pressure or rapid breathing should seek prompt medical attention.

For the most up-to-date information on flu, visit <http://www.flu.gov>, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).

USG is working closely with local, state and federal officials to remain informed and manage the campus response to H1N1 flu. USG will provide email updates and text messages to the campus as new information warrants. Please visit the following page if you are interested in enrolling in the USG e2campus alert system, <http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/alerts>.

Thank you for your efforts in keeping all members of the USG community in good health. Although we cannot eliminate the spread of the virus, our collective efforts can significantly minimize its reach and overall impact.

Sincerely,



Robyn Dinicola-Wagle  
Director, Student and Academic Services  
The Universities at Shady Grove