

UM Health Services Respiratory Virus Season Recommendations

Respiratory viruses, like cold and flu, affect the body's respiratory system. They typically last 5 to 7 days and are self-treated with rest, hydration, and OTC medications. Most people do not need to see a doctor or nurse. See "When to seek medical attention" below for more information.

To avoid catching respiratory viruses:

- Get a flu shot at your local pharmacy, doctor's office, or the UM flu clinic.
- Get adequate rest and nutrition to keep your immune system working at its best.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer frequently.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze with either a tissue or your sleeve.
- Avoid contact with people who may be sick.

Symptom	Flu	Cold
Onset	Sudden	Gradual
Fever	100 °F or higher	None or under 100 °F
Head and body aches	Can be severe	Mild
Fatigue	Moderate	Mild
Cough	Dry, can be severe	Common, often with mucus
Nasal Congestion	Sometimes	Very common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common in first few days

What to do if you develop flu-like symptoms:

- **STAY HOME!** Limit interactions with other until you no longer have fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- **STUDENTS LIVING ON CAMPUS** should either return home for the duration of the illness or remain in their room and receive care and meals from one person to limit exposure.
- **COMMUTER STUDENTS, FACULTY & STAFF** should remain at home.
- Students should e-mail professors, coaches, and employers as soon as possible and let them know they have the flu.

How to treat symptoms:

- Get plenty of rest and adequate fluids.
- Fever reduction- Take acetaminophen (eg: Tylenol) every 4-6 hours or ibuprofen (eg: Advil, Motrin) every 6-8 hours. These two medications may be alternated every four hours.
- Congestion- Take a medication containing phenylephrine or pseudoephedrine (eg: Sudafed).
- Cough- Take a medication containing dextromethorphan (eg: Robitussin or Mucinex DM).
- Sore throat- Try throat lozenges or sprays that contain an anesthetic (eg: Chloraseptic).

When to seek medical attention:

- Those at higher risk for complications should make an appointment with a medical provider at the first signs of flu. This includes pregnant women, persons who have chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, cancer or heart disease), persons with a compromised immune system, or persons over age 65.
- If your symptoms get worse after treatment at home for 3 or 4 days, you need to be checked to make sure you have not developed a secondary infection.
- Emergency medical attention is needed if you develop severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, chest pain or pressure, severe vomiting, confusion, or seizures.

If you have any additional questions or for an appointment, contact Health Services at (205) 665-6275.