

## Seasonal/Pandemic Influenza (Flu) FAQs for Instructors/Faculty

### **Q: What is the difference between Seasonal and Pandemic Influenza (Flu)**

A: The Seasonal Flu happens annually and usually peaks between December and February. Only certain people are at high-risk for serious complications, and the vaccine for the annual flu is readily available at healthcare providers and most pharmacies.

The Pandemic Flu rarely happens. The last Pandemic Flu we had was in 2009 with H1N1. During a pandemic healthy people can be at high risk for serious complications, and pandemic vaccines may not be available during the early stages of a pandemic. Pandemic flu can cause major impact to the general public, and can lead to travel restrictions and school or business closings.

### **Q. What is the College doing to inform the community of the Seasonal and Pandemic Influenza?**

A: The College closely monitors state and federal agencies like the CDC who are actively tracking influenza cases. Prevention and mitigation information will be distributed as soon as the College receives it.

### **Q: As an instructor, what should I do to prepare my students for the flu?**

A: Ensure course rosters for all course sections are up to-date, including an e-mail address and a telephone number for each student. Make certain all students have the instructor's contact information: e-mail address, office number, or contact information for other electronic messaging services. This exchange of contact information will enhance the lines of communication between faculty members and their students.

Regularly encourage students to do the following: cover your cough and sneeze; clean your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner; and stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine).

### **Q: What guidance should I provide students if they have an influenza-like illness?**

A: Students should be encouraged to stay at home and to contact their instructors to let them know they have the flu. If a student is unable to make contact with an instructor, the student should contact the Dean of Students or a counselor. Please allow greater flexibility with policies for class attendance and missed assignments and in the manner or timing by which students complete their work.

### **Q: As an instructor, what should I do if a student appears to be ill?**

A: It may be difficult to discern if a student is ill, and even if they are ill, the nature of the illness. Only the student who may be ill may make the decision to stay at home. However, it is appropriate for the instructor to regularly remind all students in the class to stay home if they have influenza-like illness.

**Q: What should instructors do if they are ill?**

A: If you are ill with influenza-like symptoms, stay at home and follow the normal protocol for notifying your department.

**Q: Who makes the decision to cancel or suspend classes?**

A: The decision to cancel or suspend classes is made by the College administration and is not an individual instructor decision.

**Q: Where can faculty, staff, and students get more information regarding the College's pandemic flu plans including the latest updates?**

A: Information is available at MC's Public Safety and Emergency Management Web page <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/life-at-mc/public-safety/emergency.html>

**December 2019**