

Basic Self-Care Strategies for Students in Self-Isolation

Students with influenza-like-illness (ILI) are being asked to isolate themselves. Influenza-like-illness (ILI) is defined as fever (temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater) and a cough and/or a sore throat in the absence of a KNOWN cause other than influenza.

1. Isolate:

- a. **Go home** for a few days if possible, **or stay in your room** except to use the bathroom or visit the Health Center.
- b. **Wear a facemask** to prevent spreading your germs whenever you are out of your room.
- c. **Maintain isolation** until you do not have a fever x 24 hours without using fever reducing medications. You must have a thermometer to take your temperature.
- d. **Notify your Commons office.** You will receive information about available support for meal delivery and class absences.
- e. If you have asthma or a chronic medical condition, notify the Health Center.

2. Rest:

Bed rest is critical if you're diagnosed with the flu. Not only will you avoid transmitting a highly contagious illness to others, you'll help your immune system better fight off the infection.

3. Hydrate:

Adequate fluid intake is one of the most important aspects of fighting influenza. Choose water, juice and warm soups to prevent dehydration. Most individuals will need at least 3-5 liters (1 liter = ~ 32 oz.) per day of non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic fluid when ill.

4. Medicate:

Take medications according to package instructions. If you have questions about dosing or medication interactions, call the Health Center at x 5135.

- a. Fever and Body Aches
 - i. Acetaminophen (ie. Tylenol)
 - ii. Ibuprofen (ie. Motrin, Advil) or Naproxen Sodium (ie. Aleve)
 - iii. You can take acetaminophen with either ibuprofen or naproxen sodium, but you should not take ibuprofen and naproxen sodium together because they are similar types of medication.
- b. Congestion:
 - i. Afrin & Sinus Rinse: see instructions @ http://www.middlebury.edu/campuslife/services/health/prevention/Help_For_Your_Sinuses.htm.
- c. Sore Throat:
 - i. Drinking lots of fluids, gargling with salt water (made by combining a cup of warm water and a teaspoon of salt), sucking on throat lozenges and hard candy can often be helpful for easing the pain of a sore throat.
- d. Cough:
 - i. Cough associated with colds may be caused by nasal obstruction or postnasal drip. Clinical trials have found that most cough medications are no better than placebo in treating an acute cough. Medications with dextromethorphan may help somewhat, but treating nasal congestion (see above) may yield greater benefit. You can also try to avoid sleeping completely flat. Sleeping propped up on two or three pillows may do a great deal to help make breathing easier.

5. Hand Hygiene & Cough Etiquette

Keep your germs to yourself. See: <http://www.middlebury.edu/NR/rdonlyres/8B0AA485-1B91-4CED-B408-236831B180EC/0/RespiratoryEtiquetteHandHygieneProcedures.pdf> for details.

6. Getting Help:

- a. Call the Health Center (or Dept. of Public Safety if the Health Center is Closed) if:
 - i. Your fever or symptoms are severe despite taking self-care medications
 - ii. You can not self-hydrate due to nausea or vomiting
 - iii. You have medical questions.
- b. Call your Commons if you need help with:
 - i. Meals
 - ii. Roommate issues
 - iii. Class Absences
 - iv. Non-medical questions