



Building for Our Next Century

August 24, 2009

Dear VSU students, faculty and staff:

The H1N1 swine flu influenza virus is continuing to spread worldwide and cases have continued to be reported within the U.S. throughout the summer months, contrary to the usual pattern for regular seasonal flu, which circulates in the fall and winter months. Swine flu cases have been documented in Valdosta, including two cases occurring on the VSU campus in June. Both students recovered rapidly, which has been the usual pattern for this illness in previously healthy individuals.

Since the H1N1 swine flu virus continues to circulate widely within the U.S., including Georgia, we can expect to see cases in the university population this semester. So far, except in high risk patients, H1N1 swine flu has been a fairly mild illness with symptoms similar to those of regular seasonal flu, and most patients recover without seeking medical care. High risk patients include pregnant women, patients with asthma or diabetes and with certain chronic medical conditions or decreased immunity. VSU officials have been monitoring the situation closely, coordinating with state and local health agencies to take steps to protect students, faculty, and staff to minimize spread of the illness. Based on recently revised CDC guidelines, we are recommending that students, faculty and staff who live either on or off campus and who have flu symptoms should self-isolate (i.e., stay away from others) in their residence hall rooms or at home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone with the exception of getting medical care or other necessities (fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). They should keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick. If persons with flu symptoms must leave their home or residence hall room to seek medical care or other necessities they should cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. Students should contact the Student Health Center if they are experiencing flu symptoms including: fever of 100 degrees or more, sore throat, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, aching muscles and joints, and occasionally nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. We encourage students to first call the center, if possible, and speak to a health professional, who will be happy to answer questions and provide guidance to students who are having flu-like symptoms and facilitate treatment for those needing medical care.

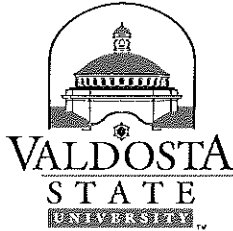
Seasonal flu is also expected to be circulating this fall and winter along with swine flu. The immunization for regular seasonal flu is expected to be available earlier than usual this year and may be available as early as August or September to make way for swine flu immunization, which is not expected to be available until at least mid-October. The H1N1 swine flu vaccine is

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not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine. It is intended to be used alongside seasonal flu vaccine to protect people. Immunization against both seasonal flu and H1N1 swine flu is strongly encouraged. Immunization is considered to be the single best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu. Further announcements will be made regarding vaccine availability and immunization guidelines as that information becomes available to us. VSU will continue to follow the direction of the CDC and will modify our plans and procedures accordingly. VSU will follow CDC guidelines with regard to treatment with antiviral medications (Tamiflu or Relenza). CDC guidelines currently recommend antiviral treatment only for hospitalized patients or for people who are at risk of complications from the flu, which includes people with asthma, diabetes and certain other chronic medical conditions, and pregnant women.

The likelihood of transmission of the flu virus can be minimized by observing some simple commonsense guidelines:

- Cover coughs or sneezes with tissues, and then throw the tissues into the trash.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand gel frequently.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- When flu is prevalent in the community, practice “social distancing,” i.e. stay away from large gatherings, avoid shaking hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edwin Hiatt  
Director  
VSU Student Health Center

CDC: Action Steps for Students, Faculty and Staff

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/institutions/toolkit/actionstepsstudents.htm>

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