

Students and Parents FAQ

What is swine flu?

Swine flu is a contagious (close contact) respiratory illness caused by a virus that usually infects pigs. This virus has mutated to infect humans with a highly contagious strain of flu virus called influenza A (H1N1)

What are the symptoms of H1N1 flu?

The typical symptoms are:

- a sudden fever (a high body temperature of 38°C/100.4°F or above), and
- a sudden cough.

Other symptoms may include:

- headache,
- tiredness,
- chills,
- aching muscles,
- limb or joint pain,
- diarrhoea or stomach upset,
- sore throat,
- runny nose,
- sneezing, or
- loss of appetite.

How can I find out about the changing situation within the University?

The University's Health and Safety Department's website contains comprehensive information and guidance regarding the pandemic and the section titled Pandemic Flu Advice is being updated as regularly as the developing situation requires.

All students, including those in private accommodation, are strongly advised to register with a General Practitioner GP shortly after arriving in Edinburgh.

I am concerned about arrangements for registrations and examinations.

Information regarding the current arrangements for registrations and examinations can be found at www.registry.ed.ac.uk. The University's pandemic flu contingency planning includes possible alternative arrangements for students to register with the university at the start of the academic year and to sit examinations. Students will be advised if alternative arrangements are to be made and the Registry website will show up-to-date information regarding any changes to the current situation.

I am a student in University halls of residence who has become ill with flu.

Students should react in exactly the same way as any other member of the public by contacting their GP or NHS24 by telephone at the first sign of flu like symptoms. If, as a result of this telephone contact, you are diagnosed as probably having swine flu, or suffering from a flu like illness, you should stay in your room and contact the halls warden, or Accommodation Services Reception. Accommodation Services have in place contingency plans to deal with and help ill students in residences. Ill students should not attend classes or mix with other people in communal areas until all symptoms of the illness have gone.

I am a student who has become ill, and who is living in accommodation provided by an external landlord.

Students in this situation are advised to stay in their accommodation, contact their GP or NHS 24 as above and to exempt themselves from classes and social interaction as above. It is a good idea for students in this situation to enter into an agreement with a friend or flat mate that in the event of either of them becoming ill that the friend or flat mate will act as the others 'flu buddy' and collect any prescription drugs or food for them.

I am about to travel to the UK and am concerned about swine flu.

There is a perception in some areas of the world that coming to the UK will put individuals at a higher risk of contracting swine flu, than would be the case in some other countries. This is based on the fact that the UK has recorded a significant number of cases over the last few weeks, and appears to have more prevalence of swine flu statistically.

The UK has sought to identify and monitor the epidemiology of this flu infection closely since April 2009, and has one of the best detection systems in the world, so apparently higher rates of infection are due to cases being more efficiently identified here.

Current information on the spread of the pandemic indicates that case numbers are decreasing slightly. All people who legitimately enter the UK can be included in the government's pandemic flu strategy, including the application of antivirals, and vaccination programmes.

I am the parent of a student about to travel to the UK and am concerned about swine flu.

The UK and Scottish governments have been planning for the possibility of a flu pandemic for a number of years, as has the University of Edinburgh. Key authoritative sources of information on the current flu pandemic can be accessed at:

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/AvianInfluenza/mexicanswiuneflu>

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1191942171181>

Information on the University of Edinburgh's preparedness planning is available at:

NEW LINK REQUIRED

I am about to travel abroad from the UK, what should I do?

If you have been diagnosed as having, or suspect you may have, swine flu, do not travel until after your symptoms have stopped.

Wherever you travel, you should always take the same sensible precautions that you do when at home. Know where you can get medical advice if you or your family feels unwell and make sure you have over-the-counter medication for coughs and sneezes.

What should I do if I have other health problems and think that I have the flu virus?

If you have existing chronic heart, liver, kidney or neurological disease, or asthma that requires treatment with inhalers or has required hospitalisation, immuno-suppression (whether caused by illness or treatment), diabetes mellitus, or are pregnant, and you think you may have the flu virus, or are in close contact with someone who has been confirmed by GP diagnosis as having the virus, you should contact your GP immediately and inform him/her of your symptoms and existing condition(s).

Should I go to classes, the Library etc., if I have been in contact with someone who I know has swine flu?

Yes, as long as you do not have flu-like symptoms. If you are feeling well, you should go about your normal activities, including going to classes or work. It can take up to seven days (normally two to five days) after infection for swine flu symptoms to develop. If you develop symptoms, stay at home and follow the general hygiene advice.

Can I get the H1N1 vaccination from the University?

Currently the vaccine is being offered to people according to a priority list managed by the Scottish Government. The first series of vaccinations are

being offered to frontline health workers as well as those in the High Risk group.

For more information on these risk groups please see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/AvianInfluenza/mexicanswineflu/mexicanswinefluQandA/vaccination/who>.

If you feel you are in a High Risk group, please speak to your GP, contact NHS 24 (08454 24 24 24) or call the Swine Flu Information line (0800 1 513 513) who can give you further information.

Does the University prescribe the vaccination/have a stock of the vaccination?

The vaccination must be prescribed by a Medical Doctor. The University does not hold any vaccination.

The University's Pandemic Flu Executive Group is liaising with the Lothian Health Public Health team with regard to the vaccination programme and its relevance to students.