

Human Swine Flu

Information for Cambridge students

As you will be aware the summer months saw a significant number of swine flu (**H1N1 virus**) cases in the UK. Though this may now have peaked, we expect the autumn to bring a wave of new cases. For the vast majority of individuals, the H1N1 virus has produced symptoms that are comparatively mild and brief, if unpleasant. The purpose of this note is to reassure students contemplating coming up to Cambridge, and concerned family members, that the Colleges and University have comprehensive plans in place consistent with National Health Service and Health Protection Agency advice. These will enable any students who are taken ill, including those with pre-existing medical conditions and others considered particularly vulnerable, to receive the care they need while they are unwell in Cambridge. The University and Colleges will respond with appropriate urgency if the condition of any individual deteriorates suddenly, both for the sake of the individual and to minimise the risk of spreading the infection to others living or working nearby.

The plans are a simple adaptation for a College setting of the advice given to all members of the public to find “flu friends”, who will access medication and provide fluids and food. They reflect the fact that newcomers to Cambridge may need help in getting care and medication from one of the City’s antiviral collection points. Those who return to Cambridge know that they can rely on the good will and responsible behaviour of all members of College communities in working closely with the College (including the College Nurse and Tutorial team) to help each other to continue normal academic and social life as far as possible.

Human Swine (H1N1) Flu Symptoms

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal flu infection.

You may have swine flu if you have a high temperature (over 38°C / 100.4°F) AND have two of the following symptoms: unusual tiredness; headache; runny nose; sore throat; shortness of breath or cough; loss of appetite; aching muscles; diarrhoea or vomiting.

We are working closely with regional medical authorities. Their advice is that for all those who do not have symptoms daily life in Cambridge can and should continue as normal, and that any of our students who develop flu-like symptoms can expect the same prompt treatment as they would at home.

If you do develop fever and flu-like symptoms, you should be reassured that we are in a position to provide prompt treatment and care in your College room; we will also ensure that all necessary measures are taken by our cleaners and domestic staff to minimise the spread of infection.

Useful contacts:

National Pandemic Flu Service: <https://www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk/> Tel: 0800 1513 100

CamDOC Cambridge General Practitioners’ out of hours service: 01223 464242

NHS Direct (24 hour medical advice and assistance): 0845 4647 (<http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>)

Porter’s Lodge: 01223 XXXX

What you should do if you develop these symptoms

The College has a series of people available to take your call and to put you in touch with available sources of medical advice and treatment.

If you develop fever and other flu-like symptoms you should do the following:

- Take your temperature, and if it shows that you have a fever of 38°C / 100.4°F or above:
 - Contact the Porters at **01223 XXXXXX**. Do not just leave a message and do not walk across College.
 - Contact the National Pandemic Flu Service, online, at: <https://www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk/> or by phone: **0800 1513 100**.
 - Alternatively, ask a Flu Friend to do so on your behalf. You or your friend will need to be prepared to answer a series of questions and provide a few important pieces of information, including your date of birth, and your current temperature, along with details of other symptoms and current medical history. You will also need a means of recording a personal unique identifier that a flu friend will have to present at the antiviral collection centre along with a copy of documentation confirming both their own and your identity – e.g. copy of passport, driving licence, birth certificate or bank account card. You are advised to take a photocopy of one of these forms of ID in advance. Stay where you are (that is, in your College accommodation) and rest.
 - Your Flu Friends will liaise with the College Nurse and the Tutorial Office, arrange for prompt medical assessment and care through the National Health Service, and ensure that you are looked after, giving you further information and supplies while you are unwell.
 - You should contact your doctor **directly**, rather than using the National Pandemic Flu Service, if
 - you have a serious underlying illness;
 - you are pregnant;
 - you have a sick child under one year old;
 - your condition suddenly gets much worse;
 - your condition is still getting worse after 7 days (5 for a child).

Now turn over for some useful advice and reminders:

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Good Hygiene Practice

The Swine flu virus (H1N1) is not transmitted by food. There is no risk of catching the illness from eating properly handled and cooked pork or pork products.

To reduce the risk of catching or spreading the virus it is good practice to follow respiratory and hand hygiene advice, such as

- covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible;
- disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully;
- maintaining good basic hygiene, for example washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to your face or to other people;
- cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.

Current medical advice is that only health professionals or those who need to come into close prolonged contact with affected individuals should wear a disposable mask. Where appropriate, the Porter's Lodge and College Nurse will issue masks and other essential equipment, contained in a Flu Pack, along with detailed instructions and equipment, to assist those asked to serve as Flu Friends and affected individuals.

We are, however, advising all students to take a few steps in advance of coming up to Cambridge:

1. Students should purchase their own personal thermometer, their own personal over-the-counter flu relief medication (which can help alleviate the symptoms and reduce temperature) and a small tube of alcohol-based hand gel and tissues.
2. Students who are **returning** to Cambridge (i.e. second years and above) should also make arrangements with two friends who will act as Flu Friends. Members of student-organised 'College Families' and neighbours will fulfil this role for newcomers to Cambridge.
3. We are also asking all students to let Colleges have current mobile phone numbers, and to ensure that they have working mobile phones and chargers.

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