



SWINE FLU INFORMATION
FOR
STUDENTS LIVING IN UNIVERSITY
ACCOMMODATION



Queen's
Accommodation
and Hospitality

This leaflet provides information on how to look after yourself should you develop swine flu, how to get help if you, or a friend, need it and how to avoid passing on flu to other people.

The illness

The illness typically begins with a high fever and cough. Other common symptoms are fatigue, muscle and joint pains, headache, sore throat and runny nose. Some people also get vomiting and diarrhoea. Symptoms last for 3-4 days and then usually take another 3-4 days to settle. You may be infectious for 5 working days and until your symptoms have settled. The infection can be treated with antiviral medicines. These reduce the rate at which the virus can multiply and so can shorten the length of time you are unwell, reduce the severity of the illness and reduce the risk of you infecting others.

A small proportion of people with flu get secondary bacterial infections. These are treated with antibiotics if they occur. Flu can also affect pre-existing health conditions such as asthma or diabetes. Anyone on treatment for these conditions may have to alter the amount of the medicines they use during the time they are unwell with flu.

Managing your illness

Registration with a GP

All initial Swine Flu NHS care is provided by your GP. You **MUST** be registered with a GP who is prepared to provide care to you **AT YOUR PLACE OF RESIDENCE**. This is likely to be a local Belfast GP and you may need to change your GP when you come to Queen's. Advice about the location of local GPs is available through the Accommodation Office.

Anti-viral medicines: You will probably be prescribed a course of anti-viral medicine by your doctor or Out of Hours GP service. Treatment will need to be taken twice a day for 5 days. Tamiflu (oseltamivir) is a tablet. Relenza (zanamivir), an alternative anti-viral, is given by an inhaler.

Paracetamol: Paracetamol reduces fever and can alleviate aches and pains. The adult dose is 2 tablets. You can have up to 4 doses (8 tablets in total) in 24 hours. Read the information on the outside of the packet for further information on how to use it. If you think you are allergic to paracetamol, or you are being treated with one of the medicines listed on the pack, or have liver or kidney disease, contact your doctor for advice before using.

Other medicines: Keep taking any medicines that you normally take for other health conditions. Your doctor will advise you if you need to alter these whilst unwell with the flu. If you take a contraceptive pill, you should also keep taking that as per usual. Anti-viral medicines will not reduce its effectiveness, although diarrhoea and vomiting might.

Looking after yourself

Contact a couple of friends to let them know you are unwell and ask them to be your flu friends. Their job will be to keep in touch with you and make sure you are kept supplied with drinks, food and other things you might need over the next week.

Eating and drinking

Drink lots of fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated. You'll need up to 3 litres per day whilst you are feverish. Drinks containing sugar will provide you with some energy. Avoid alcohol. Eat if you feel like it. Simple snack foods and cereals are fine. If you don't feel like eating, don't worry, you will have sufficient energy reserves to last the illness, but you do need to drink. Get your flu friends to keep you supplied with drinks and food. You should not leave your room to go to the kitchen or to the shops.

Rest

You will probably feel tired. Take time to rest and get a good amount of sleep. This will help speed up your recovery. If you are preparing for exams, take regular breaks from work to lie down for a bit.

When to contact the doctor

Phone the doctor if you are concerned that you are not getting better as expected or if you develop any of the following symptoms.

- Chest pain
- Breathing difficulties e.g. fast breathing, breathlessness interfering with speaking
- Frequent vomiting
- Passing very little, or very dark, urine
- Severe earache
- Severe headache

Keeping in contact

You must contact Occupational Health at the University Health Centre – tel. 028 90975520 or email occhealth@qub.ac.uk to advise them that you are unwell.

Keep in touch with your flu friends. They should contact you at least a couple of times a day. You can contact them too. Let them know what drinks and food that you want. Keep your phone charged and switched on.

Let your school know that you are unwell and will be unable to attend classes for one week.

If you think your parents will be worried about you, call them regularly or arrange for them to call you on your mobile.

If you have a computer in your room, use email and the Queen's web pages to stay in touch.
<http://www.qub.ac.uk>

The Residential Assistant responsible for your block or one of the Community Youth Workers will get in touch once a day to check that you are OK.

How to avoid passing on the infection

You must stay in your room as much as possible whilst you are infectious. You will be unable to attend classes or go out during this time. You also need to take special precautions when someone visits you. Please follow all these instructions:

1. Do not leave your room, except to go to the toilet or to the shower, for the next seven days, or until you have been told by your doctor that you are no longer infectious.
2. When you do need to leave your room, wash your hands before going out. Keep your door closed.
3. Cover your mouth and nose with a clean tissue when coughing or sneezing.
4. Discard your used tissues into a plastic bag. Tie the bag closed once it is full and keep it in your room until you are better.

Using the toilet

If your toilet is outside your room, wash your hands with soap and water or clean them with an alcohol wipe before going there to make sure that you do not contaminate door handles etc. that others will touch. Wash your hands again before leaving the toilet to return to your room.

Showering

If you want to take a shower, use the shower at a quiet time of day when no-one else is likely to be in the shower room. Wash your hands before leaving your room. Keep your clothes in a plastic bag when showering, don't leave them on benches or hang them up on door hooks.

Water bottles and crockery

Water bottles, cups, plates and cutlery that you use will become contaminated with the flu virus. If you are well enough you should clean them with hot soapy water in your sink or with an alcohol wipe before your flu friend takes them out of your room. Remind your friend that they should wash everything again before leaving them in the kitchen

Visitors

Keep visitors to a minimum. Instead, keep in touch by phone or email. Visitors should not come closer to you than one metre and should not sit on your bed or touch you.

Can I go home?

You are advised not to return to your parent's home to reduce the risk of you passing on the infection to people during your journey, or to your family once you get home. If you still want

to go home, arrange for your parents to collect you by car. You will not be allowed to fly when unwell.

After you have recovered

Wash your bed linen and towels in a washing machine.

Before letting others have normal access again to your room you should clean your sink, taps, door handles and other hard surfaces in your room that people may touch. Ordinary detergent or a cloth dampened with some water and hand soap will be sufficient.