Fact Sheet

Flu Prevention

Get vaccinated
Take advantage of the flu vaccine on campus. Even in years of reduced effectiveness, the flu vaccine is the most effective way to guard against the spread of the diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes, that even in cases when the vaccine fails to prevent someone from getting sick, it can lessen symptoms and shorten the duration of the illness.

Antiviral Medications
If you are exposed to or caring for someone with the flu, talk to your doctor about preventive antiviral medications. Anti-virals are most effective if given within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms (generally a chill followed by a fever with respiratory symptoms). Many patients wait until they are past this time window and really sick before they seek care and the drugs are far less effective. According to the officials, one flu strain currently spreading is more dangerous to the elderly and young children, and the flu vaccine does not protect against the strain well. Because of this, the CDC advised that it is "more important than usual" for certain patients to use antiviral drugs. They recently sent an alert to physicians advising them to prompt the use of antiviral medications for flu patients who are hospitalized and at greater risk of complications such as pneumonia.

Take everyday precautions
Hand sanitizing and cleaning common surfaces is also an important strategy to stop the spread of the flu. Adults are advised to wash their hands every time they leave a public space. Good self-care, like getting enough rest, can guard against the flu by strengthening adult’s immune systems. For instance, graduate adults are found to be more vulnerable to the flu because they often sleep little or have poor diets. Spreading awareness about the role healthy habits can play in preventing the flu may spur adults to be more mindful of their behavior. If you think you have the flu (and particularly if you have a fever) DO NOT come to work/school. Avoid spreading the outbreak.

For more information
The simplest way to fight the flu on campus may be to spread awareness. Many people already know intuitively many common flu-prevention techniques. Australia's University of Wollongong found a 70% recall rate for adults, and 80% rate for faculty with flu awareness messages simply by using social media. For more information contact EH&S (951) 827-5528 http://ehs.ucr.edu