



## **FLU SEASON HAS ARRIVED**

**With the fall 2009 semester now in full swing at Wharton County Junior College, there is concern about how the influenza virus may affect our students, faculty, and staff. WCJC administration recommends receiving a flu vaccination beginning now through December. Students, faculty, and staff should self-monitor their health and contact their healthcare provider if experiencing flu symptoms.**

**At all times, WCJC takes guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC has issued a set of guidelines for universities and colleges that minimize the spread of this virus in tight living quarters like residence halls. To view the CDC's guidelines for universities, click here: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/institutions/guidance](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/institutions/guidance).**

**WCJC will continue to monitor the latest information provided by the various local and federal health care agencies. As important information affecting WCJC staff and students is received, information will be made available through the college website.**

## ***Flu Season Reminders***

### **Good Precautionary Measures for Everyone**

Students, faculty, staff, and administrators at Wharton County Junior College can help deter the spread of the various types of influenza by following some basic tips provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)), based in Atlanta.

The CDC tells everyone that the single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year, but good health habits can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu.

Here are some tips provided by CDC and other health agencies, based on good health habits:

1. Avoid close contact with others, especially people who are sick (including hugs and handshakes). When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them.
2. Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work or school and do not run errands when you are sick to help others from catching your illness.
3. Cover your mouth and your nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw the tissue away. If you do not have a tissue, use the elbow of your sleeve instead of your hand.
4. Clean your hands; washing your hands often will protect you from germs. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Why? Germs often are spread when a person touches something that is contaminated and then touches her or his eyes, nose, or mouth.
6. Practice other good health habits — get plenty of sleep; be physically active; manage your stress; drink plenty of fluids; eat nutritious food.
7. Sanitize frequently with alcohol-based hand sanitizer gels.
8. Sanitize frequently-touched surfaces such as door handles.
9. Find healthy ways to deal with stress and anxiety.
10. Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.

If you begin to experience severe symptoms, contact your doctor or other health care professional without delay. Several anti-viral medications are effective especially when taken early. However, please contact your health care professional by telephone beforehand to ask for advice on how to minimize possible exposure to others in the health care setting.

Call 1-800-CDC-INFO for more information.

### **Top 5 Flu Shot Myths**

**Myth #1** “The flu shot GAVE me the flu.”

**Fact:**

This is probably the biggest myth surrounding the flu shot. The truth is you cannot get the flu from the vaccine. The injectable vaccine is made of inactivated viruses, so it is impossible to get the flu from the vaccine. The most common side effect is mild soreness or redness at the injection site, headache, low-grade fever, or a runny nose for a day after receiving the vaccine.

**Myth #2** “The flu isn't that bad. I get it all the time.”

**Fact:**

Influenza is directly or indirectly responsible for 114,000 hospitalizations each year and 36,000 deaths in the US alone.

**Myth #3** “I had the flu last year, so, I'm immune this year.”

**Fact:**

Influenza strains are crafty viruses and change every year. They mutate so we cannot recognize them, and they travel worldwide only to move on to new places each year. Doctors study the worldwide trends in illness and predict which strains will be the most virulent the following year. Those are the developed vaccines that become available each October. Usually there are several strains contained in one vaccine. The likelihood of becoming infected with the same strain of flu twice in a row is remote.

**Myth #4** “The flu shot did not work. Not a month later, I caught the flu.”

**Fact:**

The flu shot is very effective—about 70 to 90 percent if you are exposed to the same STRAIN of influenza that is in the vaccine. However, there are hundreds of other respiratory illnesses, viruses, bacterial organisms that can mimic flu. The flu shot only protects against the influenza virus. Best defense from other body invaders is simple hygiene. Wash your hands with plain soap and water, rubbing vigorously for 15 seconds, and then rinse well. Common ways of spreading illness is hand- to- eye contact and hand- to- nose or mouth. So keep your hands away from your face. If you are coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth. (Then wash your hands.)

**Myth #5** “The side effects of the flu shot are worse than the flu.”

**Fact:**

Most people experience little or no side effects, and the influenza vaccine usually produces no increase in systemic side effects or disability in the elderly. Symptoms attributed by patients to a recent influenza vaccine are likely secondary to coincidental illness coupled with heightened somatic awareness following vaccination. If an individual does experience flu-like side effects, the duration is short (usually no longer than 24-48 hours) whereas influenza can hang on for 10 days or more and may leave a person debilitated for a longer time. Moreover, a true case of influenza always leaves open the possibility of chronic complications (such as pneumonia) and even death.

### **What Wharton County Junior College is Doing to Help**

WCJC Maintenance Department is working on providing wall mounted hand sanitizers in all WCJC public restrooms. Custodial staff has been provided a hepacide quat virucidal disinfectant and have been spraying touchable surfaces daily. Over one hundred large (16 ounce) instant antibacterial hand sanitizers have been distributed to open areas among the campuses. Forty eight individual desk size (4 ounce) instant antibacterial hand sanitizers have been distributed to offices. Maintenance is waiting on a shipment of both sizes to supply all offices on all campuses.

Full-time employees have been provided the opportunity to receive free flu shots at these locations on the following dates:

**Wharton Campus**

Date: September 29, 2009

Time: 1pm-5pm

Location: Pioneer Student Center Ballroom

**Ft. Bend Technical Center**

Date: October 6, 2009

Time: 8am-12pm

Location: TC-101

**South Texas Medical Clinic–Bay City**

Date: October 6, 2009

Time: 1pm-4pm

Location: South Texas Medical Clinic, Bay City

**Sugar Land Campus**

Date: October 13, 2009

Time: 8 am-12 pm

Location: SGL-201A

Important up-to-date information will appear on WCJC's website as it is received from health agencies.