

Dear Members of the Skidmore Student Community,

Flu activity is widespread in most of the United States and cases are expected to increase over the next several weeks-months. Peak season is usually in February. Skidmore Health Services staff is urging students, faculty, and staff to take preventive measures to protect their health.

Influenza like illness is defined as:

Fever of 100°F (37.8°C) or higher and a cough and/or sore throat in the absence of a known cause other than influenza.

What to do if sick with the flu:

Students with flu symptoms should stay home. Ill students should limit contact with others who are not sick. Those with flu-like symptoms should not return to class until they no longer have a fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Do not attend classes or go to work while ill. Contact the Registrar's Office (registrar@skidmore.edu) so that an absence report may be sent to your faculty. Note that this report does not excuse you from course requirements or exempt you from the instructor's attendance policy. It is important that you also connect with your instructors to discuss the implications of your absence(s), preferably before missing a class or work. Health Services does not provide documentation of student medical illness/injury. Illness varies greatly among individuals. We expect students to take a reasonable and responsible approach to their academic responsibilities while keeping in mind the public health and safety of themselves and others.

If you need assistance navigating your academic obligations while ill, contact the Office of Academic Advising (advising@skidmore.edu)

Order Meals:

Students who have the flu and are on meal plans may order meals for pick up from the Dining Hall by calling 518-580-5859 or x5859 (Atrium Café). Then arrange for someone to go to the Dining Hall to pick up your meal. Roommates and friends picking up the meals must have the ill student's Skidmore ID card.

A boxed breakfast includes: water or Gatorade, yogurt, fresh fruit, and granola bar. Pick up time is between 8 and 9AM.

A boxed lunch includes: a sandwich (choice of roast beef, turkey, ham or vegetarian), bottled water or Gatorade, bag of chips, cookies, and a piece of fruit. Pick-up time is between 11AM and noon.

A boxed dinner includes: grilled chicken breast with white rice and steamed broccoli or a vegetarian option (grilled Portobello mushroom, white rice and steamed broccoli), also includes bottled water or Gatorade and a bag of chips. Pick up time is 5-6PM. Dinners will be picked up cold and need to be re-heated in a microwave.

Everyday preventive actions can help slow the spread of germs that cause many different illnesses and may offer some protection against the flu. You may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days **after** becoming sick. Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time. Because flu can spread by contact with people who are ill, we recommend that community members take these precautions:

-Get a flu shot. It is not too late to get a flu shot. There are still weeks of flu season to come. Flu shots are available at most local pharmacies and may be covered by your health insurance; please call in advance for availability. Remember that it takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that protect it against influenza virus infection. The more people who get vaccinated, the more people will be protected from flu, including older people, very young children, pregnant women, and people with certain

long-term health conditions who are more vulnerable to serious flu complication. Some media reports have speculated that this year's flu shot will only be 10% effective for Americans, based on results seen in Australia during its flu season. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said that it expects this year's effectiveness rate to be closer to last year's number, between 32% and 39%.

-Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer frequently, especially after touching common surfaces such as door handles. Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing with either a disposable tissue or a sleeve, and avoid touching your face. Avoid contact with people who are sick. Get plenty of rest to keep the immune system working at its best.

-Monitor your health. Flu symptoms include fever of 100°F or higher with cough and/or sore throat, and sometimes runny nose, muscle or body aches, headache, fatigue, vomiting or diarrhea. Complications of the flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

-Students should seek medical attention if they have acute symptoms such as body aches, cough or a fever of more than 100°F. If students get worse after being treated for 3-4 days, they should return to Health Services for a recheck to make sure that they have not developed a secondary infection. Those with chronic health conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma, diabetes or complications should notify Health Services.

Health Services is open from 9AM-4:30PM Monday-Friday, closed for lunch from 12-1PM. The office is also open on Sundays from 12-5PM for walk-in visits only.

If a student has an emergency, please call Campus Safety (518-580-5566) or go to a hospital.

Additional information regarding this season's flu outbreak may be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Our goal is for everyone to have a healthy and productive semester. Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns at 518-580-5550 or health@skidmore.edu

Thank-you,
Health Services Staff