Protect Yourself Against the Flu!

September 30, 2019

To UWRF students, faculty, and staff,

Once again, influenza season has arrived. Below is information about how to prevent or help lessen the impact of influenza.

Vaccinate: Get a Flu Vaccine!
One of the best ways to avoid getting influenza is to get an annual flu (influenza) shot (see below for where persons can obtain influenza vaccines for the 2019-2020 influenza season, including two on-campus flu shot clinics). All people 6 months and older who do not have contraindications are now recommended to receive annual influenza vaccination. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that influenza vaccination begin as soon as vaccine becomes available in the community and continue throughout the flu season. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against influenza. When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through that community.

CDC recommends annual influenza vaccination for everyone 6 months and older with any licensed, influenza vaccine that is appropriate for the recipient’s age and health status, (IIV, RIV4, or LAIV4) with no preference expressed for any one vaccine over another (https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/flu-season-2019-2020.htm).

Stop Germs:
Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs that cause influenza and colds, and other illnesses as well.

- **Practice other good health habits, such as cleaning shared work spaces with disinfectant between users.** Also get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

- **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.** If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.

- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

- **Stay Home When You Are Sick.** Flu symptoms may include fever, coughing, sore throat, runny 63or stuffy nose, headaches, body aches, chills, and fatigue, and vomiting and diarrhea may also occur. If you have these influenza/influenza-like symptoms, you
should stay home, meaning do not go to classes or work for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever.

For students who have these influenza/influenza-like symptoms:

- Contact your instructors to let them know you will not be in class. You are expected to make arrangements to retrieve class notes from a peer and complete all missed work in a reasonable time frame. Communicate with your instructor if you have questions.

- Disposable thermometers are available at the Student Health Services office at 211 Hagestad Hall, as well as free cold/flu kits, with helpful information and supplies.

- Ask a roommate, friend, or family member to check up on you and to bring you food and supplies if needed. For students living in the residence halls, isolation meals can be arranged for by going to https://www.uwrf.edu/DiningServices/IsolationMealBoxRequest.cfm or calling 715/425-4444 and asking for Dining Services.

- In most cases, healthy individuals who develop influenza/influenza-like symptoms do not need to seek medical attention. Those with underlying medical conditions who develop influenza/influenza-like symptoms should contact their health care provider.

**Antiviral Drugs**

[https://www.cdc.gov/flu/antivirals/whatyoushould.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/antivirals/whatyoushould.htm)

[https://www.cdc.gov/flu/treatment/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/treatment/index.html)

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Most people with the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms, in most cases, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people. However, if you have symptoms of flu and are in a high risk group, or are very sick or worried about your illness, contact your health care provider promptly (doctor, physician assistant, etc.). People at high risk of flu complications include young children, adults 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, and people with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease.

When used for treatment, antiviral drugs can lessen symptoms and shorten the time you are sick by 1 or 2 days. They also can prevent serious flu complications, like pneumonia. For people at high risk of serious flu complications, treatment with antiviral drugs can mean the difference between milder or more serious illness possibly resulting in a hospital stay. CDC recommends
prompt treatment for people who have influenza infection or suspected influenza infection and who are at high risk of serious flu complications.

Below is information about where persons can obtain influenza vaccines for the 2019-2020 influenza season, and where to go for more information about seasonal influenza.

Influenza shots are covered by Student Health Services at Vibrant Health Family Clinics in River Falls for current UWRF students must call ahead for an appointment to Vibrant Health Family Clinics in River Falls at 715-425-6701 (Taxi rides to and from covered for students by Student Health Services, call 715-425-7878) or students may also contact their own health care provider if they wish.

Two seasonal influenza vaccine clinics on campus this fall:

1. Generally for UW-River Falls faculty, staff, and their families:
   Wednesday October 2nd, 2019 from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. in the Trimbelle Room 231 in the University Center (provided in collaboration with Vibrant Health Family Clinic, sponsored by Student Health Services). Vibrant Health Family Clinic is a provider for most of the UWRF employee insurance plans (Healthpartners, WEA, Humana), but are not providers for WPS State Plan. **A claim will be filed with your health insurance, but must present a valid health insurance card, and Vibrant requests that persons bring a photocopy of their insurance card (front and back), which they will collect for accurate billing.** If you have any questions about benefits you should contact your insurance plan directly. The cost for flu shots (quadrivalent) at this campus clinic if you do not have health insurance coverage is $36 (check or cash only). Current UWRF students may also come to this clinic and their flu shot will be billed to their insurance (please bring insurance cards) or to Student Health Services if no insurance coverage.

2. Generally for UW-River Falls students:
   Tuesday October 29, 2019 from noon-2:00 p.m. in the Trimbelle Room 231 in the University Center (provided by Student Health Services in collaboration with Pierce County Public Health Department). The cost for flu shots (quadrivalent) at this campus clinic will be free for students and $35 for non-students (so anyone can receive a seasonal flu shot at this clinic for $35). Pierce County Public Health will be able to bill some insurance companies, so persons are encouraged to bring their insurance cards.

**Seasonal Influenza Vaccines Also Available:**
Seasonal influenza vaccines are also currently available through both Pierce County Public Health Department (715-273-6755, [http://www.co.pierce.wi.us/Public%20Health/Public_Health_Main.htm](http://www.co.pierce.wi.us/Public%20Health/Public_Health_Main.htm) or call for more information) for $35 (quadrivalent)/$75.00 for high dose (65 and older) Saint Croix County Public Health Department (715-246-8330, call for appointment) for $40 (quadrivalent)/$45 for high dose (age 65 and older).
Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls is currently offering seasonal influenza shots for $36 (quadrivalent), as well as Flublock for persons 55 years or older ($60). Again, influenza shots are covered by Student Health Services at Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls for current UWRF students. Persons must call ahead to 715-425-6701 to schedule an appointment.

Allina Health River Falls Clinic has flu shots available. Please 715-307-6600 for more information.

The following pharmacies in River Falls are offering seasonal influenza shots and will bill insurances (individuals should check with their insurance plan regarding coverage and providers):

- Family Fresh Pharmacy (715-425-8494) (303 South Main Street, River Falls): $34.99, quadrivalent, no appointment necessary, adults only. High dose available for $54.99.
- Walgreens Pharmacy (715-426-4089) (1047 N. Main Street, River Falls): $40.99 for quadrivalent, age 7 and older; $69.99 for high dose (age 65 and older, usually covered by Medicare part B); all are walk-ins only.
- Freeman Drugs (715-425-2255)(104 South Main Street, River Falls): $35 for quadrivalent, adults only; $65 for Adjuvanted for age 65 and older; all are walk-ins only.


For more information about the 2019-2020 flu season and vaccination, check out the Centers for Disease Control web page at https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/index.html.


For more information about University’s response to emergencies, go to http://www.uwrf.edu/Emergency/. The University does have an up-to-date pandemic influenza campus plan. For more information or questions, contact Student Health Services at 715-425-3293 (http://www.uwrf.edu/StudentHealthAndCounseling/).

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