

## **GUIDANCE FOR RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS EXPOSED TO UPPER RESPIRATORY ILLNESS**

### **(COVID, Influenza or Cold symptoms)**

#### **What If My Roommate or Friend Has a Respiratory Illness (COVID, Influenza, Cold)?**

You no longer need to isolate unless you are experiencing symptoms. However, you should take the following precautions:

##### **1. Monitor Your Health**

- Watch for symptoms like fever, cough, fatigue, headache, body aches, sore throat, nasal congestion
- If you develop symptoms, get tested promptly and avoid contact with others

##### **2. Testing**

- Even if you feel fine, it is recommended to take a COVID test, especially if you have had close contact
- Test kits are available through your Residence Life Office and the Student Health Center

##### **3. Precautions in Shared Spaces**

- Wear a mask when in the room or shared areas (masks are available through Residence Life or Student Health)
- Increase ventilation by opening windows if possible
- Clean surfaces regularly, especially high-touch areas like doorknobs, desks, and bathroom fixtures
- Practice good hygiene – wash hands frequently and avoid sharing personal items

##### **4. Roommate Behavior**

- a. If your roommate is not following health guidance (e.g. not masking), you can report this to the Office of Residence Life

## **WHAT ARE SOME BASICS ABOUT RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES?**

### **What causes Upper Respiratory Illness?**

- These symptoms are usually caused by a virus. Doctors also use the term “viral upper respiratory infection”, or “viral URI”. Lots of different viruses can get into your nose, mouth, throat, or airways and cause symptoms.
- Most people get better from a cold without any lasting problems. Even so, having a URI can be uncomfortable.

### **What are the symptoms of an Upper Respiratory Illness (COVID-19, Flu, Cold)?**

Symptoms include:

- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Sniffing and runny nose
- Sore throat
- Chest congestion
- Fever

## How can I tell what type of URI I have?

- **COVID-19** often starts very similar to a cold, but it can also cause a fever. If you have cold symptoms and have been around someone with COVID-19, you should get tested to see if you have it too.
- **The flu** is more likely to cause fever, body aches and extreme tiredness than a cold.
- **Strep throat** usually causes severe throat pain. It can also cause a fever and swollen glands in the neck. People with strep throat usually do not have other cold symptoms like a stuffy nose or cough.

## Can medicine help with an Upper Respiratory Illness?

- Usually, a cold gets better on its own and does not need treatment. Because colds are usually caused by viruses, antibiotics do **not** help.
- If you are an adult, you can try cough and cold medicines that you can get without a prescription (“over-the-counter”).
- These medicines might help with your symptoms, but they do not cure an URI or help you get well faster.
- Cough medications like Delsym 12 hour (or generic equivalent) may be helpful with your cough.
- Throat lozenges can also be used to help with a sore throat.
- If you try non-prescription medicines such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen for aches and pain or fever
  - Read the directions on the label and follow them carefully
  - Do not combine 2 or more medicines that have acetaminophen in them. If you take too much acetaminophen, it can damage your liver.

## What can I do on my own to feel better?

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink lots of fluids (water, juice, or broth) to stay hydrated. This helps replace any fluids lost if you have a runny nose or sweating from a fever. Warm tea or soup can help soothe a sore throat.
- Use a cool mist humidifier to add moisture to the air if it helps.
- Use saline nose drops or spray to relieve stuffiness.
- Avoid smoking and stay away from places where people are smoking.

## What if I don't get better?

- Contact your health care provider or the Student Health Center for assistance.

Reach out if you:

- Have a fever higher than 100.4°F (38 °C) as well as chills, loss of appetite, or trouble breathing
- Have a very bad sore throat
- Have a fever as well as lung disease, such as asthma
- Have a cough that lasts longer than 10 days or starts getting worse
- Have chest pain when you cough or breathe deeply, have trouble breathing or cough up blood