

Influenza, also known as the flu, is currently widespread throughout Pennsylvania and throughout our communities. Additionally, throughout J-term we have seen an increase in the number of cases of influenza here on campus.

Influenza is a virus that is different from a cold. It typically begins very suddenly and is characterized by the following symptoms.

- Fever/chills
- Body aches
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Headache

(And sometimes accompanied by congestion, sore throat and/or nausea, but usually not)

Influenza is very contagious, which makes a college community especially susceptible to an outbreak.

The best thing you can do to prevent getting the flu is to wash your hands frequently with soap and water, limit exposure to those who are sick and avoid touching your face. Transmission can occur 1 day before getting sick and up to 5-7 days after the illness begins. That means you may be able to pass the flu on to someone else before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick.

If you have flu symptoms, you should visit the Engle Center within the first 48 hours of your symptoms developing, as you may be a candidate for antiviral medication. After the first 48 hours, the medication is not considered effective. If you have flu symptoms: Stay home (do not go to work/class - limit your exposure to others), cover your cough, wash your hands frequently, and rest.

It takes about 2 weeks for a flu shot to be fully effective, but it's not too late in the season to get a flu shot if you have not yet received one.

Please feel free to contact us at the Engle Center at 691-6035 or englecenter@messiah.edu with any questions or concerns you may have.