Fighting the Flu
January 11, 2018

Across the United States, the influenza virus is causing widespread illness with some of the highest number of cases occurring in Louisiana. University has recently identified an increase in the number of seasonal influenza (Flu) cases among students and employees. As such, the University would like to encourage you to obtain a flu shot if you have not already done so. Although the flu vaccination is never 100% effective, it is the best way to prevent the flu and serious complications that can occur with the virus. The CDC recommends a yearly vaccination for everyone over 6 months of age who does not have a complicating condition such as a prior allergic reaction to the vaccine. For prices and availability of the influenza vaccine, please call Student Health Services at 482-5464.   In addition to getting the flu vaccination, please review the following information on the influenza, and what you can do to protect yourself.

What is the flu?
- The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a number of different influenza viruses that infect the nose, lungs and throat.
- The flu is a virus; therefore it cannot be treated with antibiotics. If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms visit your care provider for treatment options.
- It is spread mainly by droplets made when a person with the virus coughs, sneezes or talks.
- Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea. They can range from mild to lethal.
- People with the flu may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to up to 5 to 7 days after
- Each year flu viruses cause millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospital stays and thousands of death in the United States

What can you do to minimize the spread of the flu?
- Get a yearly flu vaccine. It is not too late to get the shot. As previously stated, although it may not always prevent you from getting the flu, it can substantially minimize the complications that can occur from the virus.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or use of alcohol-based hand rubs.
- Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unclean hands
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

For more information on influenza and other communicable diseases:

http://ldh.la.gov, https://www.cdc.gov/flu/