

**From:** [donotreply \(HSC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Important Message about the Flu  
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*The* UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA  
**HEALTH SCIENCES**

February 3, 2025

Dear HSC Faculty, Staff, and Students –

Winter months often bring an increase in cases of respiratory viruses, and this winter is no exception. However, the current positivity rate for influenza is higher than usual, having risen 50-fold in OU Health sites since the first week of December. Statewide, it is currently roughly 40%. This rise has impacted schools and businesses state-wide, and we continue to see very high numbers in OU Health clinics. As part of an academic health system, we have a responsibility to be part of the solution by practicing healthy hygiene to ensure we are able to be present for our students, patients, participants and to keep our operations going at their full capacity. Today I ask for your help in taking steps to help reduce instances of flu and other respiratory viruses by taking the following [CDC-recommended steps](#), both at work and at home.

1. **Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too. Putting [physical distance](#) between yourself and others can help lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.
2. **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you're sick. You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:
  - a. Your symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
  - b. You have not had a fever and are not using fever-reducing medication. (See more [here](#)).
3. **Cover your mouth and nose.** Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Influenza viruses are thought to spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. **Wearing a mask** is an additional prevention strategy that you can choose to do to further protect yourself and others. When worn by a person with an infection, masks reduce the spread of the virus to others. Masks can also protect wearers from breathing in infectious particles from people around them. (See [flyer](#) you may want to post in breakrooms and restrooms.)

**4. Clean your hands.**

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

- a. [Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives](#). Tips on hand washing and using alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

**5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth.

**6. Take steps for cleaner air.**

You can improve air quality by bringing in fresh outside air, purifying indoor air or gathering outdoors. Cleaner air can reduce the risk of exposure to viruses.

**7. Practice good hygiene and other healthy habits.**

Cleaning frequently touched surfaces, such as countertops, handrails, and doorknobs regularly can help prevent the spread of some illnesses. Also, get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

**8. Get Vaccinated? - It's Not Too Late!** Seasonal flu vaccines protect against the three influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. There are several flu vaccine options for you this flu season to protect yourself and others from flu and help stop the spread of germs. See the [College of Pharmacy Immunization Services page](#) for information about on-campus flu and respiratory virus vaccines and [here](#) for information about vaccines available through the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Many neighborhood pharmacies and county health departments can provide flu, RSV, and COVID vaccines as well.

Finally, individuals with patient-facing responsibilities are strongly encouraged mask as well, both to protect yourself and to reduce the spread. Thank you for taking these steps to protect yourself, your colleagues, and our campus community from the flu and other respiratory

viruses.

Sincerely,

Gary Raskob, PhD  
Senior Vice President and Provost  
OU Health Sciences

Dale Bratzler, DO, MPH  
Dean, Hudson College of Public Health  
OU Health Sciences