



The Flu Buddy System

To reduce the risk of a student with swine flu passing on the infection to others, they will need to stay in their rooms while they are unwell and infectious. This will usually be for 5-7 days. During this time they should only go out of their room to use the toilet or shower if there is not one en-suite. Unless very unwell, the person will not be admitted to hospital and will not be routinely visited by the doctor.

During this time, having a flu buddy will provide students with help and support they need to aid their recovery.

What is a flu buddy? Why do you need one?

The flu buddy will usually be a friend or someone you can trust. It will be someone they can keep in touch with and who can help look after them when they feel at their worst during the infection.

All students will need a flu buddy. If possible students should have at least two flu buddies so that if you and your first flu buddy are unwell at the same time there is still someone who can help. All the flu buddies should not come from the same flat, it is likely that close friends in the same flat will inadvertently infect one another and be ill at the same time.

For those in University accommodation the residence manager will assist as appropriate to organise flu buddies.

What will a flu buddy do?

1) A flu buddy will collect the anti-virals for their friend.

If a student develops symptoms which they believe to be swine flu they should contact [NHS Direct](#) on 0845 4647, or their GP by phone, for help.

If swine flu is considered a possible diagnosis NHS Direct or the GPs surgery may prescribe anti-virals. Someone will need to go and collect the tablets for the student: as they will be discouraged from/instructed not to collect them themselves.

2) A flu buddy will collect paracetamol for their friend.

For those students who become unwell and diagnosed with the swine flu, the residence's management are custodians of packs of paracetamol which will be distributed free of charge during this time. Paracetamol medication can also be obtained from the [University's Health Centre](#) if this is easier for those who are not residing on the University campus.

3) A flu buddy will help with simple shopping for their friend.

The student who is unwell will need to rest and drink lots of fluid, especially when running a fever. They may find it difficult to move around as they will be so weak. During this period they'll need to be supplied with fluids, (especially if their room doesn't have drinking water) and some simple foods, if they feel hungry. The flu buddy will fetch some water/fluids (not fluids that have a diuretic affect such as alcohol), and some food if it is required.

4) A flu buddy will keep in regular touch with their friend.

The student who is unwell will be resting for most of the time when very unwell, but it is important that contact is made at least daily (via telephone, text or a visit in person). This will enable them to make known any problems/needs.

5) A flu buddy will raise the alarm if their friend deteriorates.

It is important that the flu buddy reports the following to residence management team/the individual's GP/the out-of-hours service;

- If the student who is unwell does not seem to be recovering. (See Alert systems below for a list of symptoms to watch for)
- If they do not drink the fluid that has been given them over prolonged periods.

Safety precautions when making general contact with the individual who is unwell

- a) A physical visit once a day would be beneficial. Before and after entry into the room, wash your hands. If there are no facilities to do this, use an alcohol-based gel or wipes (these will be provided by the residence manager). If this is not possible, contact can be made by phone or text.
- b) When visiting an unwell student try and stay more than a metre from the individual and do not stay in the room for long periods.
- c) There may be some benefit from wearing a surgical mask when coming into close contact with those with swine flu. Should you wish to use these masks, please contact the residence manager for the instruction leaflet (on how to appropriately put the mask on and take it off), and masks.

- d) If you leave the University due to the pandemic and return home and you are a buddy to someone, please inform your buddy and the residence management team.
- e) Follow the [hygiene guidance](#) published throughout the University.
- f) In accommodation with shared facilities, extra care should be taken to minimise contact. For example:
 - o The student, who is unwell and uses the shower, should use it if possible when there is no-one else in the flat.
 - o The student who is unwell should limit their use of dishes and seek to use the same dishes, wash and reuse them and not put them back with the general dishes for use by the other flat occupants. The dishes must be thoroughly washed before being used by the other flat occupants.

Alert symptoms

If the individual's condition deteriorates (see prime list below), contact the residence management team/the individual's GP/the out-of-hours service;

- o The individual complains of chest pains
- o Their headache becomes worse
- o Their fever becomes worse
- o If they develop difficulty breathing
- o If they seem confused or become unrousable