

## **About influenza**

Influenza is a serious respiratory disease that is spread primarily through coughing and sneezing. Approximately 36,000 Americans die of influenza-related illness each year. Even for those who are normally healthy, influenza can cause high fever, cough, body aches, headaches and other symptoms that may last a week or more resulting in missed classes, assignments, exams or workdays.

In addition, college students can spread influenza in the community and expose their own family members, some of whom may be at risk of complications, such as the elderly or very young. Vaccination of college students and staff is the best way to prevent influenza on college campuses and their surrounding communities.

The Center for Disease Control and the American College Health Association encourage influenza vaccination for all students who live in residential housing and for students and their close contacts (e.g., roommates, family members) who have medical conditions that may increase their risk of influenza-related conditions. Students and staff planning to study abroad also would benefit from influenza vaccination.

## **Influenza prevention tips**

The measures below can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses such as influenza:

- Stay healthy with plenty of rest. Don't smoke, and eat a balanced diet. If you drink, limit alcohol intake to no more than one or two drinks in one sitting.
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick. When you are sick, protect others by keeping your distance.
- If you get sick with influenza, stay home from work, school and errands to protect others from infection.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Wash your hands often to help protect yourself from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread in this manner.