

Information and Questions & Answers About H1N1 Illnesses and Flu-Related Absences - FINAL 10-21-09

Any Baptist Health employee who has three or more Influenza-Like Illness ("ILI") symptoms should not be at work. This applies to all active employees of Baptist Health South Florida at all locations.

Influenza-Like Illness Symptoms ("ILI Symptom(s)") are as follows:

- Fever (temperature of 100°F or 37.8°C or greater)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue

Employees:

- **If you have three or more of the other Influenza-Like Illness Symptoms, you should not be at work and/or will be removed from active duty and sent home.**
- **You will not be permitted to return to work until: (1) the longer of either (a) 7 days from the onset of ILI Symptoms, or (b) 24 hours after the ILI Symptoms have subsided, and; (2) you have been cleared to return to work by the Employee Health Office ("EHO").**

If you are at work and feel like you have Influenza-Like Illness Symptoms, you must contact your immediate supervisor, director or manager ("Leader") to report your condition. The Leader will send you to the Employee Health Office to be evaluated during normal hours of operation. If this occurs during hours the Employee Health Office is closed, the employee should be sent home, but may go to the Employee Health Office when they are next open for business. Under no circumstances should an employee with ILI symptoms be sent to the Emergency Department. If an employee with ILI symptoms seeks treatment at his/her Primary Care Physician, an Urgent Care Center or the Emergency Room, it will be at the employee's own expense.

If you are off duty and have ILI Symptoms, you must call your Leader to report your condition as soon as possible prior to your next scheduled work day/shift

and notify the Leader that you will not be at work. The Leader will notify the Employee Health Office by e-mail of your self-reported status.

When you are returning to work from having Influenza-Like Illness, you must notify the Employee Health Office and receive clearance from the Employee Health Office to return to work. You will either need to provide the Employee Health Office with medical clearance from your doctor to return to work, or be evaluated by the Employee Health Office and be given clearance to return to work.

Q1: Does this apply to all employees? I work in a job where I never have patient contact.

A: Yes. Guidelines provided by the Center for Disease Control ("CDC") recommend that this protocol apply to anyone who works in a healthcare setting. To protect the overall safety of our patients and staff, the protocol applies to all employees of Baptist Health South Florida

Q2: What if I have only a few of the ILI Symptoms?

A: Go to the Employee Health Office during regular business hours for evaluation.

Q3: I do not have any PTO. Will I be paid if I am required to stay home?

A: No. Consistent with existing PTO policies, you cannot be paid if you do not have PTO (or time accrued in other programs such as Extended Illness Bank).

Q4: My department is very shorthanded. Why do I have to stay home if I feel as if I can work?

A: Baptist Health South Florida is following the CDC guidelines related to H1N1 illnesses that are designed to minimize the possibility of transmission and ensure the overall safety of our patients and staff.

Q5: May I work from home if I feel well enough to work but I am not allowed to return to work?

A: This is a decision between the Leader and the employee, and will depend, in part, upon the nature of the employee's job responsibilities and other factors. However, you may or may not be permitted to work from home, depending on the decision you and your Leader agree upon. Keep in mind that no employee with ILI Symptoms will be allowed to return to work at a Baptist Health facility without medical clearance through the Employee Health Office.

Q6: If I am forced to stay home, will this count against me in my performance evaluation?

A: Absence related to a single episode of Influenza-Like Illness or ILI Symptoms will not be considered an unplanned absence in accordance with the established Protocol for Absences Related to H1N1 Influenza Virus. However, any employee found abusing the absence protocol or leave policy(ies) could be subject to disciplinary action.

Q7: My family is in financial difficulty due to the recession. I cannot afford to lose any pay, but I do not have PTO time. What can Baptist Health do to help me if I am not allowed to come to work?

A: Your Leader can help you identify possible avenues for assistance, such as applying for consideration for a Sunshine Fund loan or leave sharing.

Q8: Will I be paid short-term disability benefits if I must stay home but do not feel sick?

A: You may apply for short-term disability benefits after 14 days of absence, but must meet all qualifying criteria. See your Leader or call Pay and Perks at 786-662-7178 Option 1 for more details.

Q9: My shift begins at 11 p.m. and the Employee Health Office is closed. Do I have to make a separate trip to report to the Employee Health Office for clearance before returning to work?

A: Contact the Employee Health Office for instructions during normal business hours prior to the time you are ready to return to work for your next shift or work day. Depending on the day and time of your return, the Employee Health Office will tell you how and where to get cleared to return to work.

Q10: (from a Leader's perspective): What do I do if an employee has Influenza-Like Illness Symptoms and insists that he/she feels well enough to work?

A: If an employee presents with flu-like symptoms and refuses to go home, that employee should be directed to the Employee Health Office to be evaluated. If this occurs during hours the Employee Health Office is closed, the employee should be sent home, but may go to the Employee Health Office when they are next open for business. Under no circumstances should an employee with ILI symptoms be sent to the Emergency Department. If an employee with ILI symptoms seeks treatment at his/her Primary Care Physician, an Urgent Care Center or the Emergency Room, it will be at the employee's own expense. All Leaders have an obligation to protect patients and other employees.

Q11: (from a Leader's perspective); How do I deal with an employee who does not want to report to work for fear of contracting the flu?

A: Despite the presence of H1N1 and seasonal flu, all Baptist Health employees have a duty and responsibility to report to work if they are not ill or are not required to remain out of work per the established protocol. Our patients depend on all of us. Additionally, that employee would be subject to standard PTO, leave, employee conduct and corrective action policies.

Q12: If hospitalized due to an Influenza-Like Illness, will I qualify for FMLA leave?

A: If you are hospitalized due to an Influenza-Like Illness and meet the FMLA requirements as outlined in HR policy #3400, you will be placed on FMLA leave at the time of the hospitalization and your Leader should complete a Leave of Absence Request–Form A and submit it to the Integrated Disability Management department immediately.

Q13: Will Baptist Health's Backup Care providers come to my home to care for my children who are sick with the flu?

A: Yes. Our Backup Care partner, Bright Horizons also has a contingency plan in place for access to expanded resources if the flu becomes extremely widespread. The toll-free number is 877-BH-CARES or 877-242-2737. Employees may also access the website at backup.brighthorizons.com. They will need to enter the company user name: BHSF, and password: backup6. These services will be subject to available resources at the time requested.

Q14: Will antiviral medication (Tamiflu) be provided to my family members if they become ill?

A: Tamiflu is not recommended for everyone as indicated in the following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization:

- a. Tamiflu should be prescribed, and treatment started as soon as possible, for patients with severe or progressive clinical illness. This recommendation is intended for all patient groups, including pregnant women, neonates, and children younger than 5 years of age.
- b. Antiviral treatment is not required in patients not in at-risk groups who have uncomplicated illness caused by confirmed or strongly suspected influenza virus infection. Patients considered to be at risk are infants and children younger than 5 years of age; adults older than 65 years of age; nursing home residents; pregnant women; patients with chronic comorbid disease including cardiovascular, respiratory, or liver disease and diabetes; and immunosuppressed patients because of malignancy, HIV infection, or other diseases.

- c. Treatment should be started as soon as possible after the onset of illness in patients in at-risk groups who have uncomplicated illness caused by influenza virus infection.

Tamiflu may be provided to employees who meet the above criteria. Unfortunately, we will be unable to provide Tamiflu to any employees' family members.

Q15: I am a pregnant employee; will I get priority for the H1N1 vaccine?

A. As the H1N1 vaccine supply is received, Baptist Health will provide it to employees, including those who are pregnant, in accordance with CDC guidelines. If you are pregnant, you should discuss with your obstetrician any questions or concerns regarding receiving the H1N1 vaccine, and whether your physician will make it available to you.

Q16: If I have patient contact, am I required to get the H1N1 vaccine or seasonal flu vaccine?

A. Currently, Baptist Health employees are not required to take either vaccine. As availability permits, it is strongly suggested that you take both vaccines unless there is a medical reason for not doing so. This is especially important if you are a healthcare provider who is involved in patient care. This benefits you as well as our patients, your coworkers and your family.

Q17: If I have to stay home with a sick child or relative, will I have to stay out for seven days?

A. The need to stay out for seven days is based on the person that is ill, not on who they care for. If you are out for a few days with a sick child and have someone to assume his/her care, you can return to work as long as you do not have the flu or flu-like symptoms. In the event that you develop at least three Influenza-Like Illness Symptoms, then you must not return to work for seven days after onset of symptoms or 24 hours after the last symptom subsides, whichever is longer. You will also need to be cleared to return to work by the Employee Health Office.