

## *EVERYONE AROUND ME IS SICK! WHAT SHOULD I DO?*

### **Common College Illnesses**

#### *My roommate has mono? What should I do?*

**Mononucleosis** commonly known as “mono” or the “kissing disease” can be spread through kissing, but is more commonly spread through oral secretions of an infected individual; coughing, sneezing, sharing of drinking glasses. Symptoms of mono include: fatigue, weakness, sore throat, fever, swollen neck glands, swollen tonsils, and headache. It is caused by a virus, which means antibiotics are not effective or used to treat it. Roommate precautions: wash your hands, do not share eating utensils or drinking glasses.

#### *The girl I sit next to in lab is constantly blowing her nose, coughing and sneezing. What should I do?*

**Upper respiratory infection** or “cold” typically includes runny nose, cough, sore throat, congestion, watery eyes, sneezing, fatigue, fever and mild body aches. It is caused by a virus, which means antibiotics are not effective or used to treat it. It has to run its course, which is often 10-14 days. Treatment plan includes: drinking plenty of fluids, resting, gargling with salt water, taking over the counter (OTC) cold medicines, like decongestants and ibuprofen.

#### *I hear that the flu is going to be bad this year. What is the difference between cold and flu?*

**Influenza** or the “flu” has a rapid onset; the symptoms include body aches, chills, dry cough, fever (usually 102-104F) headache, sore throat, and stuffy nose. It is caused by a virus, which means antibiotics are not effective or used to treat it. It has to run its course, which is often 7-10 days. Treatment plan includes: plenty of rest, increase fluids, ibuprofen for body aches. Getting a yearly flu vaccine is highly recommended for prevention.

#### *When I was in grade school I had pink eye. Do I have to miss class because my eye is red?*

*No*, not necessarily. As an adult, you need to wash your hands anytime you touch your eye. **Conjunctivitis**, often called “pink eye” typically can include redness in the white of the eye, discharge from the eye (often crusty in the morning); it may also include a swollen eye lid. The most common form of pink eye is caused by a virus. Warm moist compresses to the eye can help with comfort and decrease redness. Some red eyes are caused by irritation from the environment or allergies; artificial tears or drops may help with comfort. Some eye infections can be caused by a bacterial infection; these require a clinic visit and possible prescription for antibiotic eye drops.

#### *The girl down the hall slept in the bathroom and was sick all night. What should I do?*

**Gastroenteritis** is commonly known as the “stomach flu.” Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and a low fever. It is usually caused by a viral infection. To ease stomach pain, rest the stomach for a few hours by not eating or drinking anything. Advance your diet starting with sips of clear liquids. Then eat small amounts starting with bland foods like crackers or toast. Avoid dairy, spicy and fried foods.

### **In order to lower your risk of any infection:**

- \* *Wash your hands frequently*
- \* *Avoid sharing drinks or eating utensils*
- \* *Avoid close contact with sick individuals*