

SEASONAL FLU/AVIAN FLU COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Members of the Campus Community:

If you're planning to travel abroad, the Schiffert Health Center encourages you to take precautions against seasonal influenza by getting the flu vaccine. **The flu vaccine is available at Schiffert Health Center to high risk students and dates will be posted on the web (www.healthcenter.vt.edu) when the vaccine is available to this group. Schiffert Health Center and Intravene will sponsor a flu/immunization clinic on campus for students, faculty and staff November 9 from 11 a to 8 p and December 6 from 12 noon to 6 p at the Commonwealth Ballroom in Squires. Cost is \$25.00 No appointment is necessary.**

More travel advice can be found online at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) and the World Health Organization (www.who.int).

In addition to the flu vaccine, it is always prudent to follow good hygiene practices to protect yourself from viral infections. These practices include:

- Washing your hands frequently and not touching your eyes, nose, or mouth after coming in contact with objects such as keyboards and door knobs.
- Encouraging others to cover their mouths when sneezing and coughing, to use tissues, and dispose of them properly

Given the heightened awareness of the avian influenza Type H5N1, also known as the "bird flu," the Schiffert Health Center offers the following tips for those who may be traveling to areas where cases of the avian flu have been reported. Confirmed cases of bird-to-human transmission have been reported in several countries, including China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

- Avoid contact with poultry (chickens, ducks, geese, pigeons, turkeys, and quail) or any wild birds.
- Avoid settings where H5N1-infected poultry may be present, such as commercial or backyard poultry farms and live poultry markets.
- Do not eat uncooked or undercooked poultry or poultry products.
- Discuss antiviral medication with your health care provider before departing the United States.

Finally, if you believe you may have been exposed to influenza, including avian influenza, during your travel, please follow these important steps:

- Monitor your health for at least 10 days.
- If, at any point during this period, you become ill with fever and develop a cough, sore throat, or difficulty breathing, or if you develop any illness with fever, consult a health care provider.
- Before you visit any health care provider, call the provider's office and tell the provider the above symptoms, where you traveled, and if you have had direct contact with poultry.**
- Travel only if you are seeking medical care. Limiting contact with others as much as possible can help prevent the spread of an infectious illness.

If you have any questions, please contact the Schiffert Health Center at 231-6444.