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Forward Together Update [Reminder Preventative Measures to Stay Well & Comparison of Symptoms for Cold, Flu, & COVID], October 21, 2020

University of Northern Iowa

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University of Northern Iowa

Forward Together Update—10/20/20

Protecting Against COVID-19 this Winter

Cooler weather is officially upon us, meaning more people will be staying indoors - a hibernation season that coincides with the start of the flu season. With viruses being more prevalent this time of year, it's logical that national health experts are predicting a rise in COVID-19 cases, as well.

It's a trend that is starting to take shape in [Iowa and beyond](#). COVID-19 cases in Iowa increased by more than 7,400 in the last week. Nationally, more than 387,000 cases were reported.

Although the UNI campus community has done an excellent job following health safety protocols that have successfully reduced the spread of the virus on campus, we need to be especially vigilant as the months turn colder.

Remember the basics - both on-campus and beyond: Protect yourself and others by wearing a mask, washing your hands, staying home when you're sick, and avoiding crowds and indoor gatherings. The decisions we make today will protect our health now and in the months to come.

How to Tell the Difference Between a Cold, Flu and COVID

Generally speaking, it's easier to tell the difference between a cold - which has milder symptoms often including a runny or stuffy nose - from the flu, which is more severe. Flu symptoms include a fever or feverish feeling, cough, sore throat, headaches and body aches. Serious cases can lead to pneumonia.

But the difference between the flu and COVID-19 can be more difficult to determine. If in doubt, get tested for COVID-19. One notable difference with the coronavirus is it may include a change in or loss of taste or smell.

Remember to fill out the [Panther Health survey](#) each day before leaving for campus - answering those questions correctly can help determine if you should stay home or get tested and helps prevent the spread of COVID-19. Call the Student Health Clinic COVID-19 line 319-273-2100 to be assessed for a test.

And don't forget to get your [free flu shot](#). In addition to UNI, local pharmacies can provide these vaccinations.

Reaching out for Help

The pandemic has upended all of our lives and, seven months in, pandemic fatigue is taking a toll on everyone's mental health.

Don't forget about the [resources available](#) on campus through the Counseling Center.

The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies has a great [list of resources](#) available for people who find themselves in difficult situations, including caring for family members impacted by COVID-19.

For those who want to try an app, check out [COVID Coach](#), which was developed for veterans but can be used by anyone to track their mental health over time. It doesn't replace professional mental health care, so please reach out to the Counseling Center for assistance assessing your mental health and resources for one-on-one care.

Celebrating Halloween Safely this Year

With Halloween just around the corner, many families are thinking about how to participate safely. The CDC has released [recommendations](#) on ways to enjoy Halloween and to protect you and your loved ones from potential exposure to COVID-19.

Have questions? Reach out to us

Students seeking answers to questions about COVID-19-related issues should email us at forwardtogether@uni.edu. You can also find resources and information about COVID-19 on the [Forward Together website](#).