

## Hampton U. students battle allergies and flu-like illness

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HAMPTON, Virginia – With drastic, day-by-day changes in the **weather**, it has been hard for Hampton University students to stay healthy. The high-to-low temperatures are leaving no one safe from flu-like symptoms.

"The weather is so bipolar here that I do get sick or close to being sick more than when I'm at home," said Deja Young, a nursing major from Chicago.

However, with higher-than-normal pollen counts in our area, students may just be suffering from **allergies**.

It is important to know the symptoms of either case, so it can easily be taken care of. Seasonal allergies usually consist of a runny nose, and red, watery, itchy eyes, making a person feel as if they have a cold. The flu, however, has more harsh symptoms such as fever, chills, muscle aches, headaches and fatigue.

"It's the major weather change; one day it's hot the next day it's cold," said Megan Hill, a MPH certified health education specialist. "The plants are confused."

The seasons are mixing up and flowers are starting to bloom early. Also, individuals react to the weather differently so that can affect when people start to get their allergy symptoms.

A few students said they know they suffer from allergies, but do not necessarily take care of them. Yes, it is not as harmful as passing on the common cold, but can still affect those around you.

"I know it's just allergies, so I am letting it run its course," said Emani Smith, a freshman nursing major from Fredericksburg, Virginia.

"My prescription is a strong medicine that helps because without it, I basically feel sick," said Ebony Grieves, a five-year MBA major from Chicago.

Victoria Daniels, a journalism major from Raleigh, North Carolina said, "I have asthma so allergies really send me over the cliff. "I had the flu three weeks ago and everything was elevated. It was all bad."

Although allergies are not contagious, germs are still being spread from sneezing and coughing. Furthermore, infections can occur if not treated properly.

On the other hand, the flu hits the body hard. A few Hampton students have been sent to the hospital because of the virus. Some try to stick it out, but it is too much for the body.

"I felt like I was hit by a bus. I have never felt that weak," said Gibril Ghee, a sophomore from Atlanta. "If I did not go to the hospital, I don't know what would have happened."

Waiting without the proper care, the flu can do a lot of damage, so be sure to find out how to stop it before it gets worse. Use the resources around campus, such as the health center, or even local establishments.

"I didn't have time to go to the campus health center, so I had to go to Sentara," said Morgan Harris, a junior accounting major from Hartford, Connecticut. "Luckily, I didn't have the flu, but I did have a fever that could have gotten worse."

For those that have not gotten sick or experienced any of the symptoms above, stay ahead and take precaution. Dress according to weather, take vitamins and/or medicines that will build your immune system, a personal favorite being **Emergen-C**.

"I think **Allegra D** works the best because it unstops my nose and I can breathe and my eyes don't water as much," said Chardae Ashanti, a psychology major from Columbus, Ohio.

Health education specialist Hill advised "hand washing. Don't rub your eyes. Keep your hands away from your face, and stay hydrated." She also stated that you should be aware of your allergy symptoms so you know the difference between seasonal allergies and an actual cold virus.

Talk to your doctor, or take a visit to the health center if you feel yourself coming down with any symptoms that present themselves as a cold or flu or allergies. Schedule an appointment to learn more about how to protect ourselves during the rest of this flu season.

Students can utilize the campus health center which can be reached at 757-727-5315, or any of the Urgent Care clinics in the Hampton Roads area.

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