GET READY FOR FLU SEASON

You are sitting in class and suddenly begin to feel feverish and have the chills. You may also experience a cough, sore throat, and headache. Maybe you have a runny or stuffy nose as well as body or muscle aches and fatigue. You may or may not have vomiting or diarrhea. With or without a fever, these may all be symptoms of the flu.

The flu, or influenza, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It is spread mainly by airborne droplets released by people sick with the flu who cough or sneeze without following appropriate respiratory hygiene practices. If you inhale these droplets, you may become infected with the viruses. The viruses can also survive on surfaces for 2 to 8 hours, so if you touch these items and then touch your mouth, eyes, or nose, you can get the flu.

HOW TO AVOID CATCHING THE FLU

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting vaccinated for the flu every year. But according to a recent Student Health 101 survey, 58.7% of respondents said they would not get the flu vaccine this year.

Seasonal flu vaccination usually begins in September and continues throughout the flu season. There are two ways to get vaccinated:

1. **Flu shot:** This is an inactivated vaccine, meaning it contains killed virus.

2. **Nasal spray flu vaccine:** This option is a live, weakened flu virus that does not cause the flu. Within two weeks of receiving this vaccination, your body will develop antibodies that protect you against certain types of flu.