

Germ-Free Zone!

Protect
Yourself
from Flu



What is a pandemic?

A "pandemic" is a serious disease that spreads around the world and can occur at anytime of the year. A flu pandemic starts around the influenza virus for which people have little or no immunity, there is no vaccine, and many people would become sick. Flu spreads in areas where people closely interact such as schools, businesses, and transportation.

Health officials cannot predict the timing or severity of the next pandemic but it is wise for us to prepare. Influenza pandemics occurred three times in the past century – in 1918-19, 1957-58, 1968-69.

How is pandemic flu different from seasonal flu?

Seasonal flu comes every year, most often between October through April, Pandemic flu rarely occurs, but will initially look a lot like seasonal flu (fever, cough, runny nose, and muscle pain). Because pandemic flu is caused by a completely new flu virus that no one has had before, the body will not have a natural defense to fight it off. Even healthy people will get sick and severe complications, like pneumonia, could develop.

Health officials expect that large numbers of people will become ill, including people we rely on every day, such as teachers, police officers, and utility workers. This would cause a big impact on our schools, hospitals, and businesses, and disrupt the services that are routine and normal in the daily life of our community.

What Would Be the Impact of a Pandemic?

A pandemic may come and go in waves, and each wave could last for six to eight weeks. Disruptions to everyday life may take place worldwide as many people could become seriously ill at the same time.

A large percentage of the population will require some form of medical care and health care facilities could become overwhelmed. This may create a shortage of hospital staff, beds, and other essential supplies. In addition, the need for flu vaccine is likely to outstrip supplies on hand and antiviral drug supplies will likely be inadequate early in a pandemic.

Your Child at School

Schools play an important role in the community. In a pandemic, schools may be closed to control the spread of disease and children would then stay at home with care givers. Parents will need to plan ahead for the care of their family and organize essential supplies at home. Some advice is common sense, but families need to prepare now, before it occurs.

Are you prepared?

Learn more at www.pandemicflu.gov



**There are a few simple things
you can do now to prepare:**

- ▶ Start healthy habits now.
- ▶ Have an emergency plan.
- ▶ Build an emergency kit.
- ▶ Stay home when you are sick.
- ▶ During a pandemic, avoid large crowds.



Have a plan to:

- ✔ Arrange for child care if schools are closed or if you are sick.
- ✔ Ask your supervisor if you could telecommute or have a flexible work schedule.
- ✔ List important phone numbers for family, friends, neighbors, doctor, and others.
- ✔ Volunteer with local groups to prepare for a flu pandemic.

Build an emergency kit

During a pandemic, stores may be closed or out of supplies. It is important to keep extra supplies on hand. These supplies will also be useful for other types of emergencies. As a start, your kit should include:



Food and Water

- ◆ A 1- to 2-week supply of food and water
- ◆ A gallon of water per person, per day
- ◆ Ready-to-eat nonperishable packaged food
- ◆ Baby food or formula, special dietary products, if needed
- ◆ Food for your pets
- ◆ Plastic eating utensils, plates, cups, manual can opener

Emergency Supplies

- * Portable radio
- * Batteries
- * Flashlight
- * Blankets
- * Extra cash in small denominations



Medical Supplies

Refresh medications regularly to make sure they have not expired.

- Prescription drugs and essential medications
- Medical supplies to monitor special health conditions
- A fever reducer and pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin®)
- Cold/cough medicines and other non-prescription drugs
- Anti-diarrhea medicine
- First-Aid kit: bandages, gauze, thermometer, vinyl gloves, etc.
- Surgical-type masks from a drug store or hardware store

Household Products

- 🏠 Soap, liquid detergent, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- 🏠 Disinfecting wipes or bleach (Mix 1 gallon of water with 1/4 cup bleach)
- 🏠 Disposable vinyl or latex gloves to help protect you, while taking care of sick family members
- 🏠 Tissue and trash bags
- 🏠 Toilet paper and sanitation supplies
- 🏠 Disposable diapers and feminine products



Healthy Habits Stop the Spread of Disease:

Cover your cough

- ◆ Cover your coughs and sneezes with your arm, sleeve, or tissue.
- ◆ Teach your family to cover their cough. Throw away tissues immediately after use.
- ◆ Try to stay at least three feet away from others who are ill.



Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Teach your children to sing Happy Birthday twice while they wash their hands to make sure they are washing long enough to get rid of most germs.
- Wash your hands after sneezing or coughing.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to help kill germs, especially when you are on the go.
- Use disinfecting wipes to clean things that people touch at home and work (door knobs, phones, remote controls, toys, light switches)

Get your yearly flu shot

- ▼ The yearly flu shot or nasal spray flu vaccine can protect you from getting sick with seasonal flu viruses. A pandemic will require a special flu vaccine.
- ▼ People who are most at risk for problems from the flu need the flu vaccine each year, including:
 - Children 6 months up to 5 years old
 - Adults over 50
 - People of all ages with chronic illnesses
 - Pregnant women



- ▼ Babies under 6 months old **cannot** get the flu shot. If you and your family get flu shots, you will decrease the chance that a baby can catch the flu from you.
- ▼ If a vaccine supply is available, everyone else is encouraged to get a flu shot to stay healthy and prevent spreading flu to others in the community.