

## WHAT IS PANDEMIC FLU?

Pandemic flu is a type of influenza that spreads rapidly all over the world. Every few decades a strain of pandemic flu arises. There have been three pandemics in the last 100 years. Like seasonal influenza, pandemic flu is usually spread by people coughing, sneezing and touching an infected surface. The symptoms of pandemic flu are identical to those of "ordinary" flu, but are usually more severe.

Flu viruses are constantly changing, creating new strains. Pandemics happen when new flu strains develop, for which people have no immunity. This allows the virus to quickly spread, infecting hundreds of thousands of people all over the world.

Since people have no immunity to the new virus, pandemic flu is likely to cause more severe illness and deaths than the common seasonal flu. A pandemic is also more likely to affect day-to-day life, as governments, communities and families fight to contain the disease.



## PANDEMICS DEATH TOLL SINCE 1900

1918-1919 Pandemic	US Worldwide	675,000+ 50,000,000+
1957-1958 Pandemic	US Worldwide	70,000+ 1-2,000,000
1968-1969 Pandemic	US Worldwide	34,000+ 700,000+

## HOW IS PANDEMIC FLU SPREAD?

Pandemic flu is transmitted from person to person, just like seasonal flu. Coughing, sneezing, and touching infected items are all methods of contagion.

The greatest risk for transmitting the virus is from one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after becoming sick.

## POTENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEASONAL FLU AND PANDEMIC FLU

Seasonal Flu	Pandemic Flu
Occurs usually in winter	Can occur anytime
Affects up to 10% of population	Affects up to 25% of population
Responds to available vaccines	No vaccine available, at first
Public has partial immunity	Public has no immunity
Anti-viral medication available	Anti-viral medication in short supply
Fever, cough, runny nose, muscle aches	Symptoms more intense and serious
Very young and very old hardest hit	Affects healthy worker age group
Kills about 36,000 per year	Increased number of deaths

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

U.S. Government Pandemic Flu Site  
<http://www.pandemicflu.gov>

The Centers for Disease Control  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic/>

PLANNING  
AHEAD

# PANDEMIC FLU

# EXAMPLE



PLANNING  
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While no one can stop a **pandemic**, you can take steps to protect your family and slow the spread of the disease. Planning and preparation may save your life, and the lives of your loved ones.

## THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

In the event of a pandemic flu outbreak, likely government/public health responses include:

**Isolation.** The sick will be asked to stay at home, avoiding crowds, and to seek medical attention.

**Quarantine.** Those who have been exposed to the virus may be restricted from travel and contact with others until the incubation period has passed.

**Public Gatherings.** To prevent the spread of the disease, authorities may close sporting events, concerts, theaters, schools and churches.

## BE PREPARED

During a pandemic outbreak, access to supplies and services may be limited. Be prepared to shelter in place for up to two weeks.

- Have a two-week supply of non-perishable foods such as:
  - Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, and soups
  - Dry cereal or granola
  - Protein or fruit bars
  - Crackers and dried fruit
  - Peanut butter and nuts
- Have a guaranteed two-week supply of fresh drinking water. Plan on one gallon of water per day, per member of your household.
- Have an adequate supply of household cleaners and disinfectants, such as chlorine bleach, and other necessities such as garbage bags, paper towels, diapers and toilet paper.
- Stock up on medical supplies, including fever, cough and pain-relievers, anti-diarrheal medication, a ready supply of surgical masks, latex gloves, and a thermometer.
- Have plenty of rehydration solutions on hand, such as Pedialyte® for young children and Gatorade® for teens and adults.
- Have an adequate supply of any prescription medications members of your household may need.
- Keep flashlights and a battery-operated radio on hand with extra batteries.



## STAYING HEALTHY

To stop the spread of the virus and protect loved ones, you should:

- **Wash your hands frequently** with soap and water or an alcohol-based cleaner and teach young children to do this as well.
- **Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing** with a tissue (or your upper arm). Dispose of used tissues in a wastebasket and wash your hands afterwards.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth** and teach young children to avoid this as well.
- Regularly clean kitchen and bathroom counters and other common surfaces (door knobs, telephones, etc.) with disinfecting household cleaning products.
- To prevent infection, healthy people should wear a mask when leaving their homes.
- As much as possible, stay away from others if they are sick.
- Anti-viral medications can prevent the flu, check with your healthcare provider to see if some persons in your home should use anti-viral medication.



## IF SOMEONE GETS SICK

If you or a family member exhibits symptoms of the flu, don't panic. Hospitals, fire and police services may be overwhelmed by the pandemic, so you'll need to be prepared to provide care. Keep the following in mind:

- The ill person should stay home (no school, no work or public gatherings) for seven days following the start of the illness and the reduction of fever.
- Contact your doctor for advice on caring for the sick person, especially if they are pregnant, or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema.
- If possible, keep the sick person in a separate part of your home, with access to his or her own bathroom. The door to the sickroom should be kept closed.
- Wash dirty dishes and laundry, using warm water and soap. It is not necessary to separate an influenza patient's dishes and laundry, but they should not be shared before washing.
- An ill person should wear a mask when exposed to healthy people.
- The sick person should get plenty of rest.
- The sick person should stay hydrated by drinking clear fluids (water, broth, sports drinks and electrolyte beverages).
- Remind sick persons to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of tissues promptly.
- Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers who have the flu, as it can lead to Reye's syndrome, a serious illness. Instead, treat fever and symptoms with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®).
- Children under two should not be given over-the-counter cold medications without speaking to a doctor first. Use a humidifier and suction bulb to keep mucus clear.
- Over-the-counter cold and flu medications may help relieve symptoms. However, the sick person will still be contagious.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Seek emergency medical care as soon as possible if the sick person:

- Has trouble breathing or chest pains
- Has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- Is vomiting and cannot keep down liquids
- Shows signs of dehydration like dizziness when standing, no urination, or lack of tears when infants cry
- Has uncontrolled convulsions and seizures
- Is less responsive than normal or becomes confused



## FOR THOSE GIVING CARE

- To reduce exposure, only one person should be the caregiver.
- Avoid being face-to-face with a sick person.
- Always wear masks and gloves when caring for an ill person.
- Wash your hands frequently, before and after care.
- Watch the healthy for symptoms of illness and provide treatment at once.

Stay up to date with emergency information from local and national authorities. Be prepared for the closing of schools, businesses and public services. Have emergency supplies on hand to last for at least two weeks. Keep a list of emergency phone numbers and important health information such as, allergies and blood types for each family member. Practice the good hygiene behaviors that will protect you and your family from pandemic flu.

**STAY INFORMED. STAY HEALTHY. STAY SAFE.**