

How to Protect Yourself and Prevent the Spread of the Flu Virus

There likely will not be a flu shot available during the early months of a flu pandemic. **Practicing good hygiene is the most important thing you can do to help prevent the spread of pandemic flu.** Here are simple things you can do to keep yourself from getting or spreading the flu:

PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE FLU VIRUS

- **Stay home from work and school when you are sick.**
- **Stay away from others as much as possible when they are sick.**
- **Wash hands properly and frequently.**
Use soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- **Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing.**
Trying using the crook of your elbow or your shoulder for cover, instead of hands.
- **Throw away used tissues right away**
If you use tissues to cover your cough or blow your nose, dispose of them in the nearest covered waste bin immediately after use, and then wash hands.
- **Practice social distancing.**
In a severe pandemic, you may be advised to stay away from others and from public places as much as possible to slow the spreading of illness. Plan to limit the number of trips you take to shop or run errands. Also remember that public transportation routes and times may be limited.
- **Plan who will take care of children if they are ill or if schools are closed.**
- **Plan how you will take care of ill family members.**

Questions to Ask Yourself to Prepare for Pandemic Flu

- Does your workplace have a plan for how to respond if a flu pandemic or other disaster strikes, and do you know what that plan is?
- Would you be able to use sick leave or work from home if you needed to?
- What should you do if your children's school or day-care center closes because of the flu?
- If a flu pandemic strikes, how will you care for family members at home, including those with serious or long-term illness?
- What would you do if grocery stores and pharmacies closed? Do you have enough food, water, medicine, and other supplies for at least one week to initially live on?

Learn More...

The more you know about pandemic flu, the more you can help your family and your community to prepare. Learn more at these sites:

- ❖ City of Sioux Falls Health Department—
www.siouxfallsflu.org
- ❖ S.D. Department of Health—
www.flu.sd.gov/pandemic
- ❖ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services—www.pandemicflu.gov
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control & Prevention—
www.cdc.gov/flu
- ❖ www.ready.gov/business/index.html

This guide is not intended to constitute medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

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Community Guide for the Flu

Be **AWARE** and **PREPARE** for Influenza

“Get Ready”

Pandemic Flu



“Pandemics are global in nature, but their impact is local. When the next pandemic strikes, as it surely will, it is likely to touch the lives of every individual, family and community. Our task is to make sure that when this happens, we will be a Nation prepared.”

*Michael O. Leavitt, Secretary
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services*

Pandemic Flu . . . It's not the flu you're used to.

Pandemic flu is not the seasonal flu. It is more serious. Most people who get seasonal flu recover within a week or two and may require medical treatment. Pandemic flu is different because more people who get it might not recover, even with medical treatment. People of every age may be at risk of serious illness or death.

People must understand that during a flu pandemic, communities will largely be on their own to get through the crisis.

Understanding influenza terms:

Seasonal (or common) flu is a viral respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity and a vaccine is available.

Pandemic Flu is a viral human flu that spreads rapidly around the world with high rates of illness and death. There is virtually no human immunity. Currently, there is no pandemic flu.

Avian Flu or "Bird Flu" is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds. Low pathogenic (disease-producing) Avian Flu is common in birds and causes few problems. H5N1 is highly pathogenic, deadly to domestic birds, and can be transmitted from birds to humans. There is virtually no human immunity and vaccine availability is very limited.

Pandemic flu planning in your community

This handout will help you to take steps to lessen the impact of a severe pandemic flu on your family and community. Many of these steps are also good advice to help during any natural disaster.

AT WORK

- **Prepare to stay at home.**
Staying at home from work when you are sick is the most important thing you can do to protect others.
- **Know policies.**
Ask your employer or union about sick leave and policies about absences, time off, and telecommuting.
- **Encourage planning.**
Every business, organization, and agency should have a plan for making sure essential work can get done if large numbers of employees are absent over weeks or months. You may be asked to perform duties that are not typically part of your job.
- **Explore other ways to get your work done.**
Find ways to reduce personal contact, such as increased use of emails or phone conferences. Plan to work from home.

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- **Know your neighbors.**
Talk with family, friends, and neighbors to make sure everyone is prepared. Be ready to help neighbors who are elderly, ill, or have special needs if services they depend on are not available.
- **Know your business or employer's contingency plans.**
How will they affect you and the business.

- **Know school policies.**
Know policies about illness and being absent. Be prepared for extended school closures.
- **Volunteer with community groups.**
Assist with planning for emergency response to disasters and pandemic influenza.
- **Plan how to handle other emergencies** that could arise during a flu pandemic, such as loss of power and additional emergency supplies needed. For example:
 - ◆ Manual can opener, matches, candles, flashlight, batteries, NOAA weather radio, garbage bags
 - ◆ Additional fuel supply for cooking such as charcoal or propane
 - ◆ Purchasing a portable generator

PANDEMIC FLU: Key Facts

More sickness and deaths. Every year, more than 200,000 people in the U.S. have to go to the hospital because of seasonal flu, and 36,000 die. However, a flu pandemic could infect a third of the population in the U.S, sending millions to the hospital and killing hundreds of thousands.

Annual flu shots will not protect you from the new flu virus that causes a pandemic. Flu vaccines to protect yourself may not be available until 4 to 6 months after a flu pandemic strikes.

There may be medicine. If there is a flu pandemic, and you catch the flu, there may be medicine that may make you feel better. This medicine is called antiviral medication, but it is likely to be in limited supply and may not be very effective.

Be AWARE and PREPARE!

There are steps to help protect your family and your community from flu every day.

Please read on . . .