



A FLU PANDEMIC CAN HAPPEN ANYTIME!

An influenza (flu) pandemic is different from seasonal flu epidemics. An epidemic is a widespread outbreak of an infectious disease affecting many people at the same time in a community or region. **The word “pandemic” means a global epidemic.**

HOW THE FLU CAN SPREAD

ANIMAL-TO-PERSON. Disease transmission can occur if there is direct contact with an infected animal’s feces, saliva, blood or mucus.

PERSON-TO-PERSON. The most common way for the flu to spread is through the direct transfer of the virus from one person to another. This occurs when an infected individual shakes hands, sneezes or coughs on or kisses someone else.

DROPLET TRANSMISSION. When a sick person coughs, sneezes, or even talks, they send droplets into the air around them for about 3 feet. If a droplet from an infected person comes in contact with your eyes, nose or mouth, you can be infected with their illness. Crowded, indoor environments promote the chances of droplet transmission.



INDIRECT CONTACT. Viral particles can linger on objects such as a tabletop, doorknob, telephone, keyboard, or faucet handle. When you touch a surface that was previously touched (or sneezed on) by someone ill with the flu, you can pick up the germs they left behind.

Seasonal and Pandemic Flu, What's the Difference?

SEASONAL FLU

- ◆ Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns and occur annually, usually during the winter months
- ◆ Usually some immunity is built up from previous exposures. Usually only the elderly, the very young and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk for serious complications
- ◆ Health systems can usually meet public and patient needs
- ◆ Vaccine developed based on known flu strains and is available for each annual flu season
- ◆ Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available
- ◆ Average U.S. death rate is about 36,000 each year
- ◆ Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain. Death is usually caused by complications like pneumonia
- ◆ Manageable impact on domestic and world economy.

PANDEMIC FLU

- ◆ Happens rarely but has occurred several times this century
- ◆ No previous exposure, so there is little or no pre-existing immunity. Everyone - even healthy people - may be at increased risk for serious complications
- ◆ Health systems may be overwhelmed
- ◆ Vaccine would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic
- ◆ Effective antivirals may be in limited supply
- ◆ Number of deaths could be high (U.S. death toll was about 675,000 during the 1918 pandemic)
- ◆ Symptoms and complications may be more severe
- ◆ May cause major impact on society, e.g. widespread restrictions on travel, school and business closings, cancellation of large public gatherings with potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy

YOU CAN PREPARE FOR A FLU PANDEMIC ...

- ◆ You can prepare for an influenza pandemic right now. Become familiar with what can happen during a pandemic and what actions you can take to lessen its impact on you and your family.

3 ways to prepare for a flu pandemic:

- 1 Create a Family Action Plan
- 2 Prepare a Family Emergency Kit
- 3 Keep your Plan and Kit up-to-date

- ◆ Go to www.pandemicflu.gov or www.ready.gov for additional preparedness information.

DURING A FLU PANDEMIC...

- ◆ Don't expect antibiotics to cure the flu as it is caused by a virus. Antibiotics can only kill bacteria ... they have no effect on viruses. Only take antibiotics when necessary and take them exactly as directed until they are all gone.
- ◆ Observe SOCIAL DISTANCING - stay away from places where you are in close contact with other people. People are contagious (can spread their flu) for 24 hours before they feel sick. Avoid enclosed spaces where people gather, such as movies, theaters, airplanes, buses, trains and malls. Postpone doing nonemergency travel, social events, and running nonessential errands.
- ◆ Stay home if you have symptoms of the flu, including fever, body aches, fatigue, weakness, headache or chest discomfort. Staying home to rest will help you recover faster and prevent you from spreading the flu to others.
- ◆ During a pandemic authorities may implement isolation strategies such as:
 - ✦ shutting down mass transit or preventing travel into or out of certain areas
 - ✦ restricting gatherings by closing schools, movies, churches, sports events, etc.
 - ✦ asking everyone to stay home
 - ✦ separating people who have (or may have) pandemic flu from others who are healthy
- ◆ Tune in: Local media will be your primary sources of information during an emergency.

RECOGNIZE THE FLU...

Symptoms usually start suddenly and may include fever (usually high) & chills, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches.

PREVENT THE FLU...

- ◆ Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds and use a paper towel to turn off the water. If you use an alcohol based hand sanitizer, use a product that is at least 60 percent alcohol. Rub your hands together for 20 seconds or until the sanitizer is completely dry.
- ◆ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs are often spread hand-to-face.
- ◆ Cough or sneeze into your arm/sleeve - not your hands. If you use a tissue when you cough or sneeze cover both your nose and mouth, dispose of tissue and wash your hands right away.
- ◆ Stay at least 4-6 feet away from others who cough or sneeze - or if you cough or sneeze.
- ◆ Don't share food, drinks or personal items. Use your own towel, toothbrush, razor blade, glass, or utensils.
- ◆ Disinfect shared objects and common areas *frequently*.
- ◆ Keep your immune system strong with adequate rest, regular exercise and a healthy diet.
- ◆ Get an annual flu shot to prevent getting seasonal flu.
- ◆ Ask your health care provider if you should get the pneumonia shot.

Pandemic Flu What You Need To Know



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