

Pandemic Flu: What it is and How to Prepare

When many people get a disease at the same time, it is called a pandemic. Pandemic flu is caused when people get sick or infected from a new flu virus. This type of flu spreads easily from person to person and can cause many people to become very ill or die.

Signs of Flu

The signs of seasonal flu are fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have vomiting and diarrhea. The signs of pandemic flu are the same, but they may be more severe and affect more people. With pandemic flu, healthy adults may be at increased risk for problems.

Controlling the Spread of the Flu

Health experts will test the new flu virus to see if medicines used to treat and prevent seasonal flu are effective. It may take six months or longer to make a vaccine for a new flu virus. The supply of vaccine will be small at first.

To help prevent spreading the flu, be sure to:

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water.** Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.** The flu often spreads this way.
- **Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm, not your hands.** If you have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away, and wash your hands.
- **Clean surfaces**, such as countertops, sinks, faucets, doorknobs, telephones and light switches with a disinfectant cleaner or a cleaner with bleach. You can also mix your own water and bleach solution. Mix 10 parts water with one part bleach.
- **Limit your contact with people who are ill.**
- **Avoid shaking hands, hugging and kissing** if you are ill and with others who are ill. Stay 6 feet away from those who are ill.
- **Stay away from others when you are sick.** Stay home from work, school or running errands. Leave home only for medical care and be sure to wear a disposable respirator.
- **Get a full night's rest, eat a healthy diet and drink at least 8 glasses of fluids each day.**

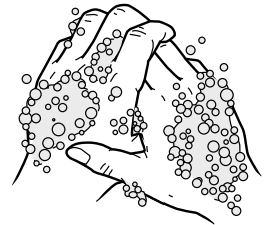


Image: OSHA, U.S. Dept. of Labor

Plan Ahead

Plan ahead to help protect you and your family and limit the effects of pandemic flu.

If many people are ill with pandemic flu:

- Hospitals and doctors' offices will be very busy.
- You may need to stay home to care for ill family or children.
- Schools and child care centers may close.
- Stores may be in short supply of food, water, medicines and medical supplies.
- Special events or religious services may be cancelled.

Use these three steps to prepare:

1. Make a plan for you and your family at home and at work.
2. Prepare an emergency kit of supplies.
3. Listen for information about what to do and where to go during a flu outbreak.

Step 1. Make a Plan

Your Plan for Home

Talk to your family about this plan so they know what to do. Your plan should include:

- Health information for each member of the family, including date of birth, blood type, allergies, past and current medical problems, current medicines and dosages, medical equipment and copies of medical insurance cards.
- Someone to care for your children at home in case you cannot be there or you become ill.
- An emergency phone and e-mail contact list. Share it with family members, work, schools and child care centers.
- Local and out-of-town emergency contacts.
- Doctors' names and phone numbers.
- Locations of hospitals, clinics and urgent cares near work, school and home.
- Locations of local and state health departments and their phone numbers.
- Pharmacy name and phone number.
- Religious or spiritual information.

Your Plan for Work

If you work:

- Discuss work policies with your boss. Ask:
 - How the business will continue during a pandemic.
 - If you can take time off to care for yourself or a family member.
 - If you can work from home or if you are expected to come to work.

- Understand you may be asked to stay home from work or come in and do other tasks.
- Plan for less or no income if you are unable to work or the company closes.

If you own a business:

- Make an emergency plan and talk to your employees about it. Test and revise your plan as needed.
- Decide which employees and supplies are needed to maintain the business.
- Provide infection- control supplies such as hand sanitizer, tissues and waste cans for soiled items.
- Look at how pandemic flu could impact business' finances, shipping and travel.
- Define your policies on employees working from home, caring for ill family or paying for employee illness.

Step 2. Prepare an Emergency Kit

Have a **2 week** supply of these items for **each person and pet**.

Food and Other Items

- Water in clean, sealed plastic containers – store 1 gallon for each person for each day
- Electrolyte drinks such as Gatorade, Powerade or Pedialyte (for children)
- Bananas, rice, applesauce and toast or crackers for nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Ready- to- eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Manual can opener
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal, granola, nuts and crackers
- Peanut butter
- Dried foods such as dried fruit and dehydrated meals
- Canned juices
- Powdered milk or cans of evaporated milk
- Cans or jars of baby food and baby formula
- Pet food

Medical, Health and Emergency Items

- Prescribed health supplies
- Prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines to treat fever, pain, stomach problems, coughs, colds and diarrhea
- Health information for each member of the family
- Soap and alcohol-based hand sanitizer

- Tissues and toilet paper
- Baby supplies such as diapers and bottles
- Digital thermometer
- Trash bags
- Cleaning supplies
- Money

Step 3. Listen for Information

- Stay calm and get as many facts as you can.
- Listen for reports on the television, radio or Internet.
- For current information, go to www.pandemicflu.gov or www.flu.gov. This may only be available in English and Spanish.