

What You Need to Know

An influenza (flu) pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of flu disease that occurs when a new type of influenza virus rapidly spreads that people have not been exposed to before (or have not been exposed to in a long time). The pandemic virus can be serious because people do not have immunity or vaccines for the new virus.



Pandemics are different from seasonal outbreaks of influenza. Seasonal influenza is caused by virus types to which people have already been exposed. Its impact on society is less severe than a pandemic, and influenza vaccines (flu shots and nasal-spray vaccine) are available to help prevent widespread illness from seasonal flu.

Influenza pandemics are different from many of the other major public health and health care threats facing our country and the world. A pandemic will last much longer than most flu outbreaks and may include “waves” of influenza activity that last 6-8 weeks separated by months. The number of health care workers and first responders able to work may be reduced. Public health officials will not know how severe a pandemic will be until it begins.

Social Disruption May Be Widespread

Plan for the possibility that usual services may be disrupted. These could include services provided by hospitals and other health care facilities, banks, stores, restaurants, government offices, and post offices. Prepare backup plans in case public gatherings, such as volunteer meetings and worship services, are canceled. Consider how to care for people with special needs in case the services they rely on are not available.

Being Able to Work May Be Difficult or Impossible

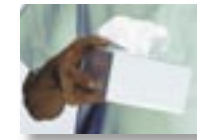
- Find out if you can work from home.
- Ask your employer about how business will continue during a pandemic. (A Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist is available at www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/business/businesschecklist.html.)
- Plan for the possible reduction or loss of income if you are unable to work or your place of employment is closed.
- Check with your employer or union about leave policies.

Schools May Be Closed for an Extended Period of Time

- Help schools plan for pandemic influenza.
- Talk to the school nurse or the health center.
- Talk to your teachers, administrators, and parent-teacher organizations.
- Plan home learning activities and exercises. Have teaching materials on hand and plan activities that your children can do at home.
- Consider childcare needs.

Stay Healthy

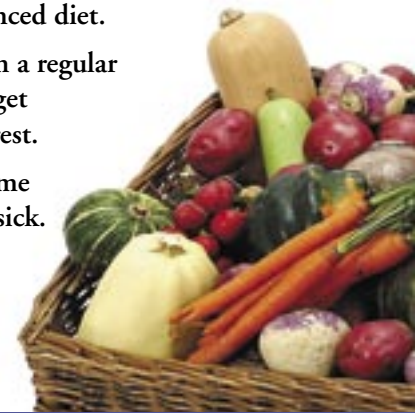
- Get a flu shot. A flu shot won't protect you against pandemic influenza, but flu shots can help you to stay healthy.
- Make sure your family's immunizations are up-to-date.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.



- Put used tissues in a wastebasket.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue.
- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

It is always a good idea to practice good health habits

- Eat a balanced diet.
- Exercise on a regular basis and get plenty of rest.
- Stay at home if you are sick.



Be Prepared

Stock a supply of water and food. During a pandemic you may not be able to get to a store. Even if you can get to a store, it may be out of supplies. Public waterworks services may be interrupted. Stocking supplies can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.



Store foods that

- are nonperishable (will keep for a long time) and don't require refrigeration.
- are easy to prepare in case you are unable to cook.
- require little or no water, so you can conserve water for drinking.

Visit www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual for a complete listing of items to have on hand for an extended stay at home.



Get Informed

Knowing the facts is the best preparation. Identify sources you can count on for reliable information. If a pandemic occurs, having accurate and reliable information will be critical.

- Reliable, accurate, and timely information is available at www.pandemicflu.gov.
- Another source for information on pandemic influenza is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline at: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636). This line is available in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY: 1-888-232-6348. Questions can be e-mailed to cdcinfo@cdc.gov.
- Listen to local and national radio, watch news reports on television, and read your newspaper and other sources of printed and Web-based information.
- Talk to your local health care providers and public health officials.



Office of
Emergency and
Public Health
Preparedness

400 E. Gray St. • Louisville, KY 40202
Tel: 502-574-6520 • www.louisvilleky.gov/health

Helpful Websites: www.pandemicflu.gov
www.ready.gov • www.protectyourfamily.ky.gov

Pandemic Influenza

Get Informed. Be Prepared.

A Guide for Individuals and Families



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