



## PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

### What is pandemic influenza?

Pandemic influenza is a global outbreak of any new flu virus that spreads easily from person-to-person and causes serious illness and death.

### Is pandemic influenza the same as avian influenza (bird flu) or H1N1 (swine flu)?

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak with a new virus. Any influenza virus could result in a pandemic if it is a new virus, spreads easily from person-to-person and causes widespread illness and death. On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization declared the fourth pandemic in the last century as a result of widespread illness due to 2009 Novel H1N1 Influenza.

### How is pandemic flu different from seasonal flu?

Seasonal Flu	Pandemic Flu
follows predictable geographical patterns	
usually happens each winter	occurs a few times each century
has been seen in the community previously, so more people have immunity	is caused by a new virus to which people have little to no immunity
leads to fewer deaths	leads to more severe symptoms and causes more deaths
can be prevented with an annual vaccination	can not be prevented with a vaccination until one specific to the new strain is developed

### What local public health departments doing to prepare for and respond to pandemic flu?

Local public health departments and their local, state and federal partners are:

- maintaining a state of active awareness,
- monitoring health issues regarding pandemic flu,
- working to educate the public about pandemic flu,
- working to strengthen plans to dispense vaccines, anti-viral medications and medical materials, and
- working with local media to streamline the process for releasing credible information to the public.

### What can I do now to protect my family and my community against a pandemic?

Practice good hygiene. Make it a habit now.

- Get an annual flu vaccination. It is the best protection against seasonal influenza.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep a distance of at least six feet from someone who is sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth after handling contaminated items.
- Stay home if you are sick, and keep your children home if they are sick or have a fever.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the crook of your elbow.
- Throw away tissues so other people won't come into contact with them.

Do all that you can to improve your health now. Healthy bodies are more resistant to disease.

- Stop smoking and using tobacco products.
- Make nutritious food choices.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get regular medical checkups and screenings.
- Get adequate sleep.
- Reduce stress in your life.
- Stay current on all recommended vaccinations.

Stay informed and follow recommendations from your local public health department and health care partners.

