

How to Prepare for a Pandemic

Practice healthy habits:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your arm, sleeve or tissue.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.



Plan for disruptions in transportation, school, medical care, and work.

- Arrange for the care of your children if schools are closed.
- Ask your supervisor about plans at your workplace for work/ leave policies during a pandemic.
- Save enough money in case you are unable to work or your company temporarily closes.
- Prepare a "Pandemic Flu Emergency Supply Kit" for your family right now.



Pandemic Flu Emergency Supply Kit

Food:

- 2 weeks to 2 months supply of non-perishable food that does not need refrigeration. Consider canned foods, protein or fruit bars, peanut butter or nuts, dried fruits, crackers, salt, and sugar. Include pet food.
- 1 - 2 weeks of water. 1 gallon of water per person per day. Canned or jarred baby food and formula. (Manual can opener)

Health and Emergency Supplies:

- 1 - 2 months supply of medicines and medical supplies that your family normally uses
- Medicines for fever/pain, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- First aid kit
- Thermometer
- Soap and alcohol-based hand wash
- Surgical or cloth face masks
- Box of disposable gloves
- Health information sheet for family: include blood type, allergies, medical conditions, medications
- Sugar, baking soda, salt to make rehydration drink
- Medical bracelet for those with serious medical problems
- List of important contact information
- Surface disinfectant (Mix 1/4 cup chlorine bleach with 1 gallon water.)
- Batteries
- Flashlight
- Portable radio
- Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers, and feminine products
- Garbage bags
- Blankets
- Cash to purchase emergency supplies, if ATM machines or banks close

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Guide

Tips on how to prepare yourself
and your family for pandemic flu



**San Mateo County
Health Department**

225 37th Ave, San Mateo, CA 94403
Web site: www.smhealth.org/pandemicflu
650.372.8572



“There are some key differences between seasonal and pandemic flu.”

Seasonal Flu vs Pandemic Flu

- Caused every year during winter months by influenza viruses that have already been circulating among people. Most people have already developed some immunity to seasonal influenza.
 - Symptoms include fever, headache, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, and muscle pain. Healthy adults usually not at risk for serious complications.
 - Vaccines are developed before the flu season, based on known virus strains and are given in the Fall.
 - Antiviral medicine is effective in most circumstances.
 - Usually causes minor to moderate economic damage.
- Caused by a new influenza virus that people have not been exposed to before— people will have no or little immunity. There have been three pandemics in the 20th century.
 - Symptoms similar to the common flu, but may affect more people, cause more serious complications, and may cause many more deaths because people will not have immunity to the new virus.
 - After a pandemic influenza strain emerges, the vaccine produced may not be available for several months.
 - Antiviral medicine may not be effective against new influenza virus.
 - Can cause catastrophic worldwide economic damage/collapse.

What is pandemic influenza?

An influenza pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a new flu disease that occurs when a new type of influenza virus emerges that people have not been exposed to before (or have not been exposed to in a long time). The disease may spread easily person-to-person, cause serious illness, and sweep across the country and around the world in very short time. An influenza pandemic may last from several months to two years. There is currently no pandemic among humans.

What is avian influenza caused by the H5N1 virus?



Avian (bird-related) influenza, caused by the H5N1 influenza virus, has sickened many birds in parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa. Health experts are concerned about the possibility of a new human pandemic because the H5N1 virus:

- Has killed a high proportion of infected birds.
- Spreads by migratory birds to other birds.

- Spreads from birds to other mammals.
- Occasionally spreads from sick birds to humans through close contact in some parts of the world. Hundreds have been infected and over half of the people diagnosed with the H5N1 infection have died.
- Capable of changing into a virus that is easily spread from humans to other humans and may cause a pandemic.

How may health authorities decrease the spread of the virus?

- Isolate sick individuals from healthy people.
- Dismiss students from schools and close child care programs.
- Modify, postpone, or cancel selected public gatherings.
- Restrict travel and public transportation.
- Recommend that businesses and workplaces modify, postpone, cancel, or close activities that may spread the virus.
- Distribute vaccines and/or antiviral medicine, if available and effective.
- Recommend creating your own “Pandemic Flu Emergency Supply Kit” now.

How else may society be affected by a pandemic?

- Widespread illness, fear, school & business closures would severely impact society, which may additionally cause:
 - Shortages of food, water, and other essential supplies.
 - Disruption of important services, such as those provided by hospitals, medical clinics, pharmacies, stores, restaurants, schools, government offices, and post offices.
 - Financial hardship from job loss and unemployment.

More Information Is Available

- San Mateo County Health Department www.smhealth.org/pandemicflu
- US Dept of Health & Human Services www.pandemicflu.gov