

What do I need to Know about Pandemic Influenza?

Pandemic influenza would be a new flu virus that could spread easily from person to person and cause serious illness in Mississippi and around the world.

Possible Impact

- Number of deaths will likely be higher than seasonal flu
- There may be limited amounts of medicine
- Travel may be restricted, schools and businesses may close, and public gatherings may be cancelled
- There is potential for a large impact on national and world economy

Symptoms

- Similar to seasonal flu, but usually more severe:
 - Fever
 - Headache
 - Sore throat and cough
 - Fatigue and weakness
 - Runny nose
- Pandemic flu causes more medical complications, including pneumonia

Treatment

- Antiviral medication can be used to treat the symptoms of pandemic flu
 - Mild cases of pandemic flu can be treated at home:
 - Stay away from others to avoid getting them sick
 - Do not share eating or drinking utensils with others
 - Get plenty of rest
 - Stay hydrated by drinking water
 - Take over-the-counter medications to treat fever, cough and congestion
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- Do not drink alcohol or use tobacco products

Vaccines

- Seasonal flu vaccines will not protect against pandemic flu, but it is important that you keep your seasonal flu vaccine up-to-date, as it may assist in keeping you healthier
- Scientists will need to analyze the new flu virus in order to develop a vaccine
- It may take several months for a vaccine to be developed once the new virus is discovered

How Can I Prepare?

- Visit www.pandemicflu.ms.gov for the most current information about pandemic flu
- Make a plan that includes:
 - Alternate child care if schools or daycare centers close
 - What you may need for the care of relatives in your home
 - What to do if your workplace needs to close
- Create an emergency kit with:
 - Two-week supply of water and non-perishable food
 - First aid supplies and prescription medication
 - Contact list and important medical information
 - Radio and extra batteries
- Practice good health habits, such as washing your hands regularly and coughing and sneezing into a tissue or into your upper sleeve
- Work with your relatives, neighbors and community in preparedness efforts

For More Information

This information is provided by the Mississippi Department of Health. Visit www.pandemicflu.ms.gov, or call 1-866-HLTHY4U (1-866-458-4948).

SEASONAL FLU VS. PANDEMIC FLU: *Do You Know The Difference?*

What is seasonal flu?

Seasonal flu is a common virus that happens every year, usually in winter months. Seasonal flu is not the same as pandemic flu. Seasonal flu is a different virus than pandemic flu, so the current flu shot would not protect against pandemic influenza.

What is pandemic flu?

Pandemic flu would be a new flu virus. Because it would be new to humans, you would have little natural defense to it. This new virus could spread easily from person to person and cause serious illness in Mississippi and around the world.

There have been three pandemics in the last century—1918, 1957, and 1968. Scientific experts believe that it is not a question of *if*, but *when* and *how severe* the next pandemic will be.

HOW IS SEASONAL FLU *Different From Pandemic Flu?*

SEASONAL FLU

Health Implications

- Happens every year, usually from October to March
- People have been exposed to the virus before, and have developed a natural defense against it
- Healthy adults usually do not get seriously ill
- Average U.S. deaths are approximately 36,000 per year
- Symptoms include: fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain

Medical Resources

- Hospitals and clinics can usually meet patients' needs
- Vaccine is available
- Medicine is available for everyone who needs it

Impact

- People who are sick are encouraged to stay home
- Mild economic and social impact

PANDEMIC FLU

Health Implications

- Happens rarely
- Population has no previous exposure; little or no natural defense against it
- Even healthy people may become ill
- Number of deaths will likely be higher than seasonal flu
- Symptoms may be more severe than seasonal flu. Complications, such as pneumonia, may happen more often

Medical Resources

- Hospitals and clinics may be very busy and crowded
- It may take several months to develop a working vaccine
- There may be limited amounts of medicine

Impact

- Travel may be restricted, schools and businesses may need to close and public gatherings may be cancelled
- Potential for large impact on national and world economy

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

Family Readiness Checklist

3 STEPS TO TAKE:

- 1 Talk with Family Members.**
It is important to think about health issues that could happen in a pandemic and how they could affect you and your loved ones. Consider what you will need to care for loved ones in your home.
- 2 Store Food and Water.**
During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. Store at least a two-week supply of drinking water and non-perishable food.
- 3 Create a Medical Supply Kit.**
Include prescription medication, pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, vitamins, and first aid materials.

CREATE A *Family Emergency Health Information Sheet*

If a mass vaccination clinic is set up in your community, you may need to provide as much information as you can about your medical history when you go, especially if you have a serious health condition or allergy. Fill in information for each family member in the space provided on the next page, or create your own chart with family health information. This information sheet can also be used for other emergencies.





FAMILY EMERGENCY

Health Information Sheet

Family Member:	Phone: Home/Cell/ School/Work	Blood Type:	Allergies:	Medical Conditions Past/Current:	Current Medications/ Dosages:

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

Local personal emergency contact _____

Out-of-town personal emergency contact _____

Hospital near:

Work #1 _____ Work #2 _____

School #1 _____ School #2 _____

Home _____

Family physician(s) _____

Pharmacy _____

Health insurance company _____ Phone number _____

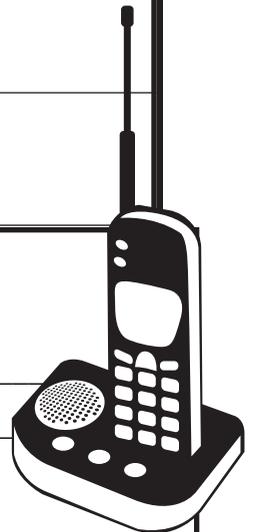
Member/Subscriber/and Group Numbers _____

Employer contact and emergency information _____

School contact and emergency information _____

Religious/spiritual organization _____

Veterinarian _____ Pet tag or microchip _____



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