

Some jurisdictions are stockpiling Tamiflu, the antiviral drug that is most effective against influenza. However, there will be world-wide shortages and distribution of the drug will be to those considered at greatest risk. Public health pandemic plans will outline the risk categories and priorities

\*\* A vaccine against influenza pandemic will not be available at the start of pandemic as the virus will be new. It takes four to five months once the virus has been identified for a vaccine to be developed.

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### RECENT PANDEMIC HISTORY

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there were three identifiable influenza pandemics.....

1918-19	Spanish Flu - most devastating pandemic in memory. --caused an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 deaths in Canada and up to 40 to 50 million deaths worldwide.
1958-59	Asian Flu
1968-69	Hong Kong Flu

*Asian & Hong Kong Flu had much lower mortality & illness rates than the Spanish flu.*

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Information from: Toronto Pandemic Plan  
<http://www.toronto.ca/health/pandemicflu/#Plan>

## AN INFLUENZA PANDEMIC FACT SHEET

### Influenza Pandemic

- An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus appears against which the human population has little or no immunity, resulting in several, simultaneous epidemics worldwide with enormous numbers of deaths and illnesses.
- Unlike many other viral respiratory infections (i.e. the common cold) the flu causes severe illness and life-threatening complications in many people.
- The influenza virus is divided into three groups: A, B & C. Type C rarely causes human illness. Only influenza A is associated with pandemics.
- With the increase in global transportation and communications, as well as urbanization and overcrowded conditions, epidemics of a new influenza virus are likely to spread quickly around the world.
- Outbreaks of influenza in animals, especially when happening simultaneously with outbreaks in humans, increase the chances of a pandemic, through the merging of animal and human influenza viruses to create a new virus, which affects humans.

Influenza pandemics occur when all four of the following occur:

1. A new influenza A virus is detected.
2. Human-to-human transmission happens easily.
3. The new virus causes serious clinical illness and death.
4. The population has little or no immunity to the virus.

## Influenza Symptoms

Influenza is caused by a flu virus which infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). It usually starts suddenly and *may* include these symptoms:

- Fever
- Muscle pain and weakness
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Diarrhea and vomiting (seen especially in children)

There are important differences between **seasonal influenza** and an **influenza pandemic**. Instances of influenza occur every year around the world. A pandemic, on the other hand, spreads around the world affecting many hundreds of thousands of people across many countries.

## **Seasonal Influenza ('the flu')**

- Seasonal influenza occurs every year during the winter months of October to April.
- In Canada, on average, 500 - 4,500 deaths every year are due to influenza alone. Annual attack rates in Canada range from 10 to 20 percent each year and can be considerably higher in epidemics.
- Globally, widespread outbreaks of seasonal ("annual") influenza are estimated to kill between 500,000 to 1 million people every year.
- Most people recover from seasonal influenza within one to two weeks without medical treatment.
- Most deaths occur in at risk groups, including:
  - people over 65 years of age
  - people with existing medical condition such as lung disease, diabetes, cancer, kidney or heart problems
  - people with compromised immune systems
  - children less than two years of age.

- Annual vaccinations, antiviral drugs and comfort measures are available for seasonal influenza.

## **Influenza Pandemic**

- An influenza pandemic usually occurs every few decades and spreads rapidly around the world affecting many millions of people.
- Unlike seasonal influenza, which usually occurs during the winter season, an influenza pandemic can occur at any time during the year.
- A pandemic is much more serious than seasonal influenza. It affects many more people - a quarter or more of the population – and is associated with much higher rates of illness and death.
- Pandemic influenza is likely to cause the same symptoms as seasonal influenza but will be more severe because no one will have been exposed to this particular virus and therefore will not have immunity.
- People of all age groups may be at risk of infection with influenza pandemic

## **Annual Influenza Vaccine**

- The vaccine against ordinary influenza is 70- 90 per cent effective in healthy adults.
- In children, it is about 80 to 90 per cent effective in preventing influenza infection, and about 62 to 73 per cent effective in preventing illness with fever.
- In elderly people, the vaccine can prevent pneumonia and hospitalization in about six out of 10 people, and prevent death in about eight out of 10 people.
- In the early stages of a pandemic, antiviral drugs will be used to help lessen the impact of the pandemic through early treatment and prophylaxis.

# Checklist for Individuals and Families

## GOVERNMENT PLANS & INFORMATION

### PROVINCIAL/MUNICIPAL

Alberta:

<http://www.health.gov.ab.ca/influenza/PandemicPlan.html>

B.C. <http://www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=150>

- Vancouver:

[http://www.vch.ca/public/communicable/docs/pandemic/title\\_page.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/public/communicable/docs/pandemic/title_page.pdf)

Manitoba

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cmoh/pandemic.html>

New Brunswick [www.gnb.ca/0053/pandemic/pdf/Pandemic\\_Plane.pdf](http://www.gnb.ca/0053/pandemic/pdf/Pandemic_Plane.pdf)

Ontario

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/pan\\_flu/pan\\_flu\\_plan.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/pan_flu/pan_flu_plan.html)

- Toronto Pandemic Plan

<http://www.toronto.ca/health/pandemicflu/#Plan>

### NATIONAL

Canadian Pandemic Plan <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi/index.html>

Safe Canada general info:

[http://www.safecanada.ca/pandemic/index\\_e.asp](http://www.safecanada.ca/pandemic/index_e.asp)

USA – Pandemic Plan <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/>

You can prepare for an influenza pandemic now. You should know both the magnitude of what can happen during a pandemic outbreak and what actions you can take to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. This checklist will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

### 1. *To plan for a pandemic:*

Store a supply of water and food. 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. This 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

Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.

Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.

Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency response.

Get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic.

## **2. To limit the spread of germs and prevent infection:**

Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water, and model the correct behaviour.

Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, and be sure to model that behaviour.

Teach your children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick.

## **3. Stay home from work and school if sick.**

## **4. Stay Healthy**

Take common-sense steps to limit the spread of germs. Make good hygiene a habit.

- 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 waste basket.
- 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.
- Stay at home if you are sick. It is always a good idea to practice good health habits.
- Eat a balanced diet. Be sure to eat a variety of foods, including plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grain products. Also include low-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish, and beans. Drink lots of water and go easy on salt, sugar, alcohol, and saturated fat.
- Exercise on a regular basis and get plenty of rest.

## **Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:**

### **Examples of food and non-perishables**

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, and soups
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter or nuts
- Dried fruit
- Canned or jarred baby food and formula
- Crackers
- Canned juices
- Bottled water
- Pet food

### **Examples of medical, health, and emergency supplies**

- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment
- Soap and water, or alcohol-based hand wash
- Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers
- Thermometer
- Vitamins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Batteries
- Manual can opener
- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Fluids with electrolytes
- Flashlight
- Portable radio
- Garbage bags