



Flu.gov Know What to Do About the Flu

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Plan Now to Be Ready for the Next Flu Pandemic

What you can do now

Use this fact sheet to help you plan how to get ready for the next flu pandemic before it happens. You can find other guides to help you, your family, your workplace, and your community at www.pandemicflu.gov.

Help your family stay healthy now and during a flu pandemic

A new pandemic flu virus will spread easily from person to person, mostly through coughing and sneezing. When a sick person coughs or sneezes near you, you can breathe in droplets that have the virus. The droplets also could land on surfaces you may touch with your hands. Get in the habit of washing your hands often and covering your coughs and sneezes. These actions can help you stay healthy now and help protect you and your family during a flu pandemic.

Teach your family the importance of these habits and have them practice now:

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water. If there is no soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand gel. Wash your hands before eating, drinking, or touching your face.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues away in a trash can, and wash your hands. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve and not into your hands.

Limiting contact helps to save lives

We have learned from past flu pandemics that during a pandemic, limiting contact among people helps to slow the spread of the virus and helps to save lives.

Being around other people makes you more likely to get sick or to make others sick. The flu could spread and more people could get sick. Until a vaccine can be made, limiting contact among people is our main tool to contain the disease and to prevent others from getting it. During a flu pandemic, health officials may ask you and your community to take actions to help limit contact among people. Your daily routines may change for several months.

Get ready now

You need to be ready when the flu pandemic **first** arrives in your area. Information will be given on local TV, radio, websites, and in the newspaper. Limiting contact among people **early** can save more lives.

Making plans **now** will help you to be ready for the next flu pandemic, which could last up to several months.

Make plans for your household

Most people with pandemic flu can be cared for at home. During a flu pandemic, hospitals may only have room to care for patients who are the most ill or require special care.

- Plan to stay home for at least 10 days when you are sick with pandemic flu. Staying home will keep you from giving it to others. Make sure others in your household also stay home when they are sick. During a severe pandemic, stay home if someone in your household is sick with pandemic flu.
- Plan who will take care of your children if you are sick. Share your plans with family members, neighbors, and friends.
- Although the flu pandemic may last several months, plan to buy and store at least a 2-weeks' supply of food and water for yourself, your family, and pets. Also, have any prescription medicine you take. This supply will support your household when you have to stay home.
- Have basic, over-the-counter health supplies such as a thermometer, facemasks, tissues, soap, hand sanitizers, medicine to relieve fever, and cold medicine.
- Have current phone numbers and e-mails for work, teachers, and community groups.

Make plans with your workplace

- Ask your boss about the company's plans for a flu pandemic.
- Learn about options for working from home or changing shifts.
- Plan to stay connected to your workplace by phone, e-mail, or Internet.

Make plans with your school

- Ask your daycare, school, or college leaders about their plans for a flu pandemic.
- Plan to keep students from seeing other students outside of school. After-school programs should be cancelled.
- If students live on campus, ask how the schools will help students if they are sick.

Make plans with your community groups

- Ask your community groups about their plans for a flu pandemic to limit contact among people.
- Talk about ways you can take part in your group from home by phone, e-mail, or Internet.
- Have current phone numbers and e-mails of group leaders and members.
- Talk about ways your community groups can help assist others during a pandemic. Examples include collecting donations of supplies, checking on people who may need help, and providing child-care support.
- Find out which community groups can support you and your family during a flu pandemic.

We may have to change our daily routines during a flu pandemic, and this may be hard for some people. Talk to people you live and work with about what you will do during a flu pandemic. Plan now.

Each of us can make a difference

In a flu pandemic, limiting contact with others can help slow the spread of illness and help save lives. Each of us can make a difference. Together, we can help protect ourselves, our families, and our communities. Be aware, plan ahead, and share with others what you have learned.

For more information

- Contact your local or state health department.
- Visit www.pandemicflu.gov.
- Call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).

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