

## Facts You Should Know

### What is a Pandemic?

A *PANDEMIC* is a global disease outbreak.

### What Is an Influenza (Flu) Pandemic?

An *INFLUENZA PANDEMIC* occurs when a new influenza A virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide.

### What is Seasonal Flu?

*SEASONAL (or COMMON) FLU* is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity, and a vaccine is available. To protect yourself against seasonal flu, get a vaccination every year.

### How is influenza (Flu) spread?

*FLU VIRUSES* spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

## Healthy Tips

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze—throw the tissue away after you use it.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- **If you get the flu, stay home** from work, school, and social gatherings. This way you will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- **Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs often spread this way.

Need more information?

**On the Web:** [www.ledgelighthd.org](http://www.ledgelighthd.org)  
[www.dph.state.ct.us](http://www.dph.state.ct.us)  
[www.PandemicFlu.gov](http://www.PandemicFlu.gov)

**Educational Links:**  
<http://www.redcross.org/news/ds/panflu>

**Phone:** Ledge Light Health District  
860-448-4882

**Or contact your local emergency management office**

# Pandemic Flu



## Facts You Should Know

From Ledge Light Health District  
Region 37 Advisory Committee

Ledge Light Health District Region 37 Advisory Committee represents key stakeholders in our community who are preparing a response to a flu pandemic. Representatives from emergency services, hospitals, health providers, businesses and schools are developing individual and coordinated plans.

## Why Plan for a Pandemic?

The severity of disease and the number of deaths caused by a pandemic virus vary greatly, and cannot be known prior to the emergence of the virus. During a severe pandemic, such as the one that occurred in 1918, there would be large surges in the numbers of people requiring or seeking medical or hospital treatment, temporarily overwhelming health services. High rates of worker absenteeism could also interrupt other essential services, such as law enforcement, transportation, and communications.

In addition, the following public health prevention strategies may occur to protect the public from pandemic flu:

- treating sick and exposed people with antivirals
- isolating sick people in hospitals, homes, or other facilities
- identifying and quarantining exposed people
- closing schools and workplaces as needed
- canceling public events
- restricting travel

## What is isolation and quarantine?

Isolation is the separation and restriction of movement of ill people to stop the spread of that illness to others. Quarantine applies to people who have been exposed to a contagious illness and may be infected but are not yet ill.



## Checklist for a Pandemic

- **Store a two-week supply of food and water**
- **Maintain medical supplies** including prescription drugs and vitamins
- **Plan on what to do if schools and day care centers are closed**
- **Plan ahead for family members** that may need assistance or have special needs
- **Prepare a family health information sheet** that includes family member names, allergies, past and current medical conditions, and current medications
- **Have these items on hand:** flashlights and batteries, radio (battery operated), thermometer, household cleaning products, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, and tissues
- **Check the news** for the latest instructions and announcements
- **Plan for limited services:** hospitals, healthcare agencies and businesses may be unavailable
- **Think about the affects of limited access:** public transportation and your place of employment may be closed
- **Educate yourself** on ways to prevent infection and limit the spread of germs See health tips on the back of this brochure

## Flu Signs and Symptoms

- Headache
- High Fever
- Muscle Aches
- Tiredness
- Dry Cough
- Sore Throat
- Stuffy or Runny Nose
- Children may experience nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea



## Steps to Take if You Have the Flu

- It is often difficult to distinguish between the flu and other illness. Contact your health care provider if you think you have the flu and are at risk for complications. These groups include persons: age 65 and older; history of chronic medical conditions; pregnant women; and young children.
- Consider antiviral medications that may be available through your health care provider. These medications work only if taken within 2 days of illness.
- Get plenty of rest, drink a lot of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco.
- Take medications such as acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®) to relieve the fever and muscle aches associated with the flu. Never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever.
- Stay home from work, school and social gatherings to limit others from getting ill.
- Use proper hand washing, and cover your cough to avoid spreading illness. See health tips on the back of this brochure.

