

How to Prepare for a Pandemic

Here are steps you can take to better prepare for a flu pandemic:

Keep a two-week supply of food and water in case of an emergency, including pandemics. Store foods that have a long shelf life, such as:

- powdered milk
- dried fruit
- canned goods
- peanut butter and jelly
- dried beans
- white rice
- dry pasta
- instant coffee/tea
- bottled water (one gallon for every person per day)
- baby and pet food, if needed

Make sure you store these foods in a dry and cool place inside your home, and check regularly for spoilage. Store supplies you would need if you couldn't leave your home for two weeks, such as prescription and over-the-counter medications, medical supplies, diapers, toilet paper and garbage bags.

At work:

- Ask your employer about your business's plan during a pandemic.
- Plan for an income loss if your business should close temporarily or you become unable to work due to a flu pandemic.
- Local schools may have to close. If you have children, make plans for childcare and home learning.

A Stressful Time

Emotional distress could be great due to illness and death during a flu pandemic. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources operates a mental health services hotline if you should need help.

Mental Health Services Hotline: 1-866-867-8290

Plan Now

Pandemic planning is a shared responsibility. Public officials are planning together for a pandemic. West Virginians can help with this by first planning for themselves, and then in their communities.

It is important to make plans now for home, work, school and the community. Planning checklists for families, businesses and communities are available at: www.wvflu.org.

If you don't have access to the Internet, call your local health department or visit your local library.



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PANDEMIC FLU



Get Prepared



www.wvflu.org



What is Pandemic Flu?

An influenza (flu) pandemic is a worldwide virus outbreak that causes serious illness and death. Pandemics should not be confused with seasonal flu outbreaks.

Pandemics vary in severity and can cause social disruptions. These disruptions could include everything from school and business closures to interruption of basic services such as:

- public transportation
- health care
- banks
- stores
- utilities
- government offices
- post offices

Large gatherings may be cancelled, schools dismissed and business hours may be shortened. Workers may stay at home and use computers, telephones and fax machines to continue their jobs. Sick people and their close household contacts may be asked to stay home (voluntary isolation and quarantine). Together, measures like these can slow a disease from spreading.

Stay Informed

If a pandemic occurs, the local and state health department will be the best source for disease information and updates. Officials will post information on Web sites, issue news releases and public service announcements and hold press conferences when necessary. If needed, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) will be used.

Prevent Pandemic Flu

Good hygiene habits can help keep you from catching or spreading the flu virus during seasonal flu or pandemics. Always cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you do not have a tissue. If you become sick, stay at home. The following are other important habits in helping prevent disease:

- Washing your hands is critical.
- Wash hands with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash your hands after coughing, blowing nose and touching eyes.
- Wash your hands before and after eating, drinking, cooking, caring for a sick person and using the restroom.
- If you do not have clean water to wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Remember, frequently touched items such as television controls, doorknobs, commode handles and light switches carry many germs. Disinfect them often.
- Dirty dishes and utensils should be washed in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.
- Laundry can be washed using detergent and warm or hot water.
- Ordinary detergents are effective at killing flu virus. If disinfectant is needed, you can use two capfuls of bleach in one gallon of water.

Is There A Pandemic Flu Vaccine?

The best prevention for pandemic flu is vaccine, but vaccine may take several months to make after the virus is identified. When a vaccine arrives, it may be in very short supply. A vaccine should be more widely available after the first wave of a pandemic. There may be groups of people who should receive the vaccine first, such as at risk health care professionals, pandemic responders and essential service providers. This helps continue critical services everyone needs.

What If You Get Pandemic Flu?

Typically, the flu can be treated with plenty of rest, fluids, treatment of fever and basic care. Some people may become very ill and require care at a hospital or other facility.

Stay up to date during the pandemic for information on where to go if you or a friend or family member is very ill. Additional health care facilities may be set up to care for flu patients.

If you or a household member have symptoms of the flu, you should practice the following:

- Wash your hands after caring for the sick.
- Limit contact time with the sick person.
- Wear a mask when less than six feet from the sick person.
- The sick person should wear a mask when others are nearby.
- The patient should not leave home until the fever has been gone for five days.