

For more information, contact your local county health department and check for updates on the Department of Health website:  
[www.doh.state.fl.us](http://www.doh.state.fl.us)

# There is no pandemic influenza (flu) in the world today but we must be prepared.

We don't know when or where a pandemic may begin or how severe it will be but we must be ready if a pandemic flu occurs.

What is a pandemic? A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A pandemic flu happens when a new flu virus appears in humans, causes serious illness, and spreads worldwide. Pandemics of flu are caused by new viruses. Because humans have not been infected with a similar virus in the past, people will have little or no protection against a new pandemic virus.



## FloridaPrepares

## What is the state of Florida doing to prepare?

Florida is preparing for a pandemic flu using the same first-rate system we use for preparing for, responding to and recovering from all large disasters. Our recent experience with hurricanes has helped raise public awareness of the need to plan for emergencies. Everyone in Florida has a responsibility to prepare—individuals, families, schools, and businesses.

### The Florida Department of Health is:

- Using early warning systems to find out if a new flu virus appears in Florida.
- Preparing to distribute available vaccines and antiviral medications.
- Working with state emergency officials on plans to keep flu virus from spreading within and outside local communities.
- Educating hospital staff, paramedics and other responders to be on alert.
- Providing accurate information to the public.

### In the event of a pandemic your local county health department will:

- 1) Use control measures to prevent flu from spreading.
- 2) Advise people to avoid unnecessary social gatherings, meetings or travel.
- 3) Lead a local effort to assure that treatment is available, and
- 4) Work with community agencies to sustain community life and public services.

## What should you be doing to prepare for pandemic influenza?

- Make it a habit to fill any prescriptions several days before you run out.
- Plan for possible loss of income if you are ill or your workplace is closed.

How

- Think about how you will manage if everyday life is severely disrupted.
- Make plans for taking care of loved ones.
- Store a supply of food that will keep for a long time and doesn't need cooking.
- Store bottled water in case of emergencies.
- Stay informed about the news.

## To limit the spread of germs and prevent infection:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based gels.
- Stay home from work and school when you are sick and make sure your family does too.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Use a disposable tissue and throw it away at once. Wash your hands again.

## How are seasonal flu outbreaks and pandemic flu different?

Seasonal Flu Outbreaks	Pandemic Flu
Happens every year.	Happens rarely (last time was in 1968).
Virus is like past years.	New virus.
Some protection from past flu illnesses.	No protection.
Symptoms are sudden fever, cough, runny nose and muscle pain; most people who are sick can stay home and get better.	Same symptoms but may be more severe because of lack of protection. Risk of pneumonia and death are increased.
Very young, very old and those with health problems are at greatest risk.	Healthy people may also be at risk.
Vaccine (flu shot) is available.	No vaccine available at this time.