

# Stay at Home Toolkit

*for Influenza*



Public Health - Idaho North Central District



Adapted from Montgomery County Department of  
Health and Human Services Public Health Services



# Stay at Home Toolkit

## ***Introduction***

This toolkit has been prepared to help you and your family care for your loved ones at home. In it you will find suggestions of supplies to have on hand and simple measures to provide good care for those who are ill. While the suggestions are useful for most types of illness, the focus of this toolkit is an influenza pandemic.

### ***What is a pandemic?***

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity, and for which there is no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person, can cause serious illness, and can sweep across the country and around the world in very short time.

### ***What would be the impact of a pandemic?***

A pandemic may come and go in waves, each of which can last for a few weeks.

A substantial percentage of the world's population may require some form of medical care. Health care facilities might be overwhelmed, creating a shortage of hospital staff, beds, and supplies. At the beginning of the pandemic, no vaccine may be available and the supply of antiviral drugs is also likely to be inadequate.

An especially severe influenza pandemic could lead to high levels of illness, death, social disruption, and economic loss. Schools and businesses may close. Public transportation and food delivery may stop or be reduced due to lack of healthy workers.

Because so many people will be sick during a pandemic, it is likely that many of them will be cared for in their homes. This booklet is designed to help you know how to take care of loved ones during a pandemic or even a typical seasonal outbreak of the flu.

**You can be prepared!**



# Stay at Home Toolkit

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# Prevention

## Preventing the Spread of Influenza

### Preventing the Spread of Influenza (Flu)



Most persons with the flu will be able to remain at home while they are sick. They can care for themselves or be cared for by others who live in the household. This information is intended to help recognize the symptoms of influenza and care for ill persons in the home, both during a typical influenza season and during an influenza pandemic.

At the beginning of an influenza pandemic, a vaccine will not be available for several months. However, it's still a good idea to get seasonal flu vaccine (a shot or nasal mist) to protect from seasonal flu viruses. **For more information on seasonal flu vaccine please call 1-866-736-6632 or go to [www.idahopublichealth.com](http://www.idahopublichealth.com).**

### Know the *symptoms of Influenza*, which may include:

Sudden onset of illness	Fever higher than 100.4 degree Fahrenheit
Chills	Cough
Headache	Sore throat
Stuffy nose	Muscle aches
Feeling of weakness	Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain and/or exhaustion occur more commonly in children

### Prevent the Spread of Illness in the Home

Flu can spread easily from person to person therefore, anyone living in or visiting a home where someone has influenza can become infected. For this reason, it is important to take steps to prevent the spread of influenza to others in the home.

### What Caregivers Can Do

Caregivers need to separate flu patients from other people as much as possible. When practical, the ill person should stay in a separate room away from other persons. Other people living in the home should limit contact with the ill person as much as possible. One person in the household should be the main caregiver for the ill person. Ideally, this caregiver should be healthy and not have medical conditions that would put him or her at risk of severe influenza disease.

### Medical conditions considered "high risk" include the following:

Pregnancy	Diabetes
Heart problems	Kidney Disease
Chronic lung diseases like Asthma	
Disease or treatment that suppresses the immune system such as HIV/AIDS, long term steroid treatment, and cancer treatments	

# Prevention

## Preventing the Spread of Influenza

### Watch for Influenza Symptoms in other Household Members

If possible, contact your health care provider if you have questions about caring for the ill person. However, it may be difficult to contact your usual health care provider during an influenza pandemic. The Public Health - Idaho North Central District website ([www.idahopublichealth.com](http://www.idahopublichealth.com)) will provide frequent updates, including how to get medical advice. If special telephone hotlines are used, these numbers will also be on the website and announced through the media.



Wearing surgical masks (with ties) or procedure masks (with ear loops) may be useful in decreasing spread of influenza when worn by the person and/or caregiver during close contact (within 3 feet). If masks are recommended by Public Health - Idaho North Central District, to be useful they must be worn at all times when in close contact with the person with the flu. Throw away mask after each use. Wearing gloves and gowns is unnecessary for household members providing care in the home during an influenza pandemic.

### What everyone in the Household can do:

- Wash hands with soap and water, or if soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based cleanser/hand sanitizer with 62% alcohol after each contact with a person with the flu or with objects in the area where the person is located.

### **WASHING YOUR HANDS IS THE SINGLE BEST PREVENTIVE MEASURE FOR EVERYONE IN THE HOUSEHOLD.**

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth without first washing your hands for 20 seconds (sing *Happy Birthday* twice). Wash hands before and after using the bathroom.
- Wash dirty dishes either in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap. It's not necessary to separate eating utensils used by a person with influenza.
- Laundry can be washed in a standard washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent. It is not necessary to separate soiled linen and laundry used by a person with influenza from other household laundry. Do not hold or carry the laundry close to your body or face, in order to avoid contamination. Wash hands with soap and water after handling soiled laundry.
- Place tissues used by the ill person in a bag and throw it away with other household trash. Consider placing a bag at the bedside for this purpose.
- Clean counters, surfaces and other areas in the home regularly using everyday cleaning products.

# Prevention

## Preventing the Spread of Influenza

### Prevent the Spread of Illness in the Community

Stay at home if you are sick. Ill persons should not leave the home until they have recovered because they can spread the infection to others.

In a typical flu season, persons with the flu should avoid contact with others for about 5 days after onset of the illness. During an influenza pandemic, public health authorities will provide information on how long persons with influenza should remain at home.



You and your loved ones may want to use the Internet as a helpful resource. The Internet can serve as a link to outside resources such as: up-to-date information on influenza, medical and social services, and access to food delivery services. Using the Internet may help reduce the spread of influenza, by allowing ill persons to stay at home. If the ill person must leave home (such as for medical care), he or she should wear a surgical or procedure mask, if recommended, and do the following:

- Cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, using tissues or the crook of the elbow instead of the hands.
- Use tissues to contain mucous and watery discharge from the mouth and nose.
- Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste bin after use or carry a small plastic bag (like a zip-lock bag) for used tissues.
- Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser, with 62% alcohol, after covering your mouth for a cough or sneeze, after wiping or blowing your nose and after handling contaminated objects and materials, including tissues.
- During an influenza pandemic, only people who are essential for personal care or support should enter a home where someone is ill with pandemic influenza.
- If other persons must enter the home, they should avoid close contact with the person and use the precautions recommended on this sheet.

# Prevention

## Cover your Cough

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

# Cover your Cough

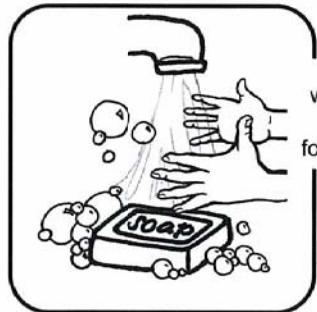


Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

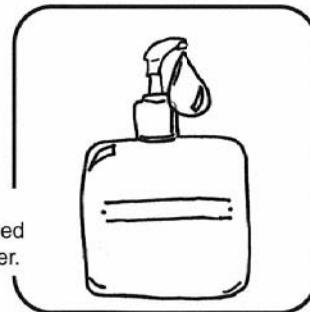


# Clean your Hands

after coughing or sneezing.



Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds



or  
clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner.



**Public Health**  
Idaho North Central District

# Prevention

## Maintain a Healthy Mind and Body

### Things to remember when trying to understand an influenza outbreak or pandemic:

- It is normal to worry about yourself and your family's safety.
- Everyone is touched by an influenza outbreak or pandemic.
- Grief and anger are normal reactions.
- Focusing on your strengths will help you heal.
- Everyone has different needs and different ways of coping.

### Common reactions that may occur during an influenza outbreak or could be:

- Difficulty talking, sleeping, walking, and concentrating.
- Increased irritability.
- Depression, sadness, mood swings, and crying easily.
- Feelings of helplessness.
- Worries about loss of income and job protection, especially if asked to stay at home for an extended period of time.
- Concerns about those who depend on you for care.
- Fears of separation from life activities.
- Feeling a lack of control, especially when control is entirely in the hands of others.
- Increased boredom.



### How to keep healthy when staying at home:

- Learn as much as you can about flu, and be aware of normal reactions during a flu outbreak or pandemic.
- Keep to your usual routine, as much as possible.

# Prevention

## Maintain a Healthy Mind and Body

- Have activities on-hand that can prevent boredom (games, toys, etc.) and keep your mind active.
- Contact a mental health professional before, during, and after an influenza outbreak or pandemic, if self help strategies are not helping or if you find that you are using drugs/alcohol in order to cope.
- Keep your living space as comfortable as possible.
- Get plenty of sleep, try to exercise, eat healthy, and relax.
- Establish a family emergency plan that includes where to meet if you become separated, and important phone numbers.



## Pay Special Attention to Children

- Let children know it is okay to feel upset when something scary happens.
- Encourage children to express feelings and thoughts, without making judgment.
- Enjoy your child and take part in activities together.
- Turn off the TV and radio, especially if the news makes you worried. If you are worried your child can sense it.

### Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

ZERO TO THREE: *Little Listeners in an Uncertain World*. Myers, D. G. (1985) zerotothree/site/docserver/handout.pdf?DocID=2381&AddInterest=1142.

Helping the helpers: A training manual. In D. M. Hartsough & D. G. Myers (Eds.), ***Disaster Work and Mental Health: Prevention and Control of Stress Among Workers*** (DHHS Publication No. ADM 85-1422, pp. 45-149). Rockville, MD: NIMH. Flynn, B (1987).

Returning home following disaster work. In ***Prevention and Control of Stress Among Emergency Workers: A Pamphlet for Team Managers*** (DHHS Publication No. ADM 90-1497, pp. 6-9). Rockville, MD: NIMH.

# Prevention

## Formula for Disinfection

It is important to clean surfaces such as counters, doorknobs, toilets and sinks, railings, telephones, computer keyboards and mouse, remote controls, and other common surface areas in your house.

Disinfectant	Recommended Use	Precautions
<b>Bleach:</b> Household bleach may be used in a 1 to 100 ratio with water. For example, to make approximately 1 quart of disinfectant: add 1 tablespoon of bleach to 4 cups of water.  <i>(To protect the disinfectant properties of bleach, store it in an opaque container, avoid exposure to sunlight. Remix daily for maximum effectiveness.)</i>  Surface spray <b>that contains bleach</b> is a good pre-mixed alternative.  Surface disinfecting wipes are also a suitable substitute.	Disinfection of material contaminated with blood and body fluids.  Use a cloth to apply solution and let stand for 3-5 minutes before rinsing with clean water	Should be used in well-ventilated areas.  Gloves and protective clothing required while handling and using undiluted bleach.  <u>DO NOT</u> mix with strong acids or ammonium based products to avoid release of noxious fumes.  Corrosive to metals.
<b>Alcohol:</b> E.G. Isopropyl (rubbing alcohol) 70% or ethyl alcohol 60%.  Waterless antibacterial hand hygiene cleaner may be used for hand hygiene purposes.	Smooth metal surfaces, tabletops, and other surfaces on which bleach cannot be used.	Flammable and toxic. To be used in well-ventilated areas. Avoid inhalation.  Keep away from heat sources, electrical equipment, flames and hot surfaces.

Sources:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Control of Pandemic Flu Virus on Environmental Surfaces in Homes and Public Places*. <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/panfacts.html>

The Johns Hopkins University & Johns Hopkins Health System, 2005



# Prevention

## Influenza Stay At Home Supply Kit

List of recommended items for people to include in their emergency kits at home:



- **Thermometer (digital preferred)**—information on taking your temperature and cleaning a thermometer is included in this kit.



- **Alcohol wipes or cotton balls that are saturated with 70% Isopropyl Alcohol or Rubbing Alcohol (to clean the thermometer).**



- **Fever Reducing Medication (Motrin®, Advil™, or Tylenol™)**—take as directed by a physician—**Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers** because it can cause Reye's Syndrome, a life threatening disease.



- **Juices & liquids**—hydration is important.

- **Bleach**—formula for disinfection is included in this kit.



- **Tissues**—in order to contain respiratory secretions. Dispose in nearest waste receptacle after use.

- **Soap and water**—for handwashing.

- **Hand Sanitizer**—with at least 62% alcohol to be used if handwashing facilities are not available.



- **Trash bags**—to dispose of waste products (e.g., tissues, plastic and paper products).

- **Surgical Masks (with ear loops or ties)**—Use only if instructed to do so by Public Health - Idaho North Central District (who will be notified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

# Caregiving

## How to Care for Someone with Influenza

**The following information is a general guide and is not intended to take the place of medical advice from a healthcare provider.**

### Monitoring and Comforting

**Keep a care log. Date, Time, What Observed.** Record the following information about the ill person at least once each day or more often as symptoms change, include the date and time. Please see enclosed care log (Caregiving Sheet #2).

- Check the person's temperature with a thermometer.
- Check the person's skin for color (pink, pale or bluish) and rash.
- Record the approximate quantity of liquids consumed each day and through that night.
- Record how many times the ill person urinates each day and the color of the urine (clear to light yellow, dark yellow, brown or red).
- Record all medications, dosages and times given.

**Keep tissues and a trash bag** for their disposal within reach of ill person.

**Watch for complications of influenza.** Complications are common in individuals with health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and lung problems, but may occur with anyone who has the flu. **If the ill person develops any of the following symptoms, call your health care provider or call 911.**

- Difficulty breathing, fast breathing, or bluish color to the skin or lips.
- Coughing up blood.
- Signs of dehydration and cannot take enough liquids.
- Difficulty responding or communicating appropriately or appears confused.
- Convulsions (seizures).
- Gets worse after appearing to improve.
- Is an infant younger than 2 months old with fever, poor feeding, urinating less than 3 times per day or other signs of illness.

# Caregiving

## How to Care for Someone with Influenza

### Medications

Use ibuprofen (Advil™ or Motrin®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol™) or other measures, as recommended by your healthcare provider, for fever, sore throat and general discomfort. **Do not use aspirin or products containing aspirin in children or teenagers** because it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.

### Liquids and Nutrition

If the person is **not** vomiting, offer small amounts of liquids frequently to prevent dehydration, even if he or she does not feel thirsty. If the ill person is not eating solid foods, give liquids that contain sugars and salts, such as broth or soups, sports drinks like Gatorade® (diluted half and half with water), Pedialyte® or Lytren® (undiluted), ginger ale, cola, and other sodas, but not diet drinks or drinks with high amounts of caffeine. Regular urination is a good sign of hydration.

### Recommended minimum daily liquid intake, if not eating solid food:

Young children- (multiply 1.5 ounces times the weight of the child). Examples:

- A 10 lb. child needs approximately 15 ounces of fluid per day
- A 20 lb. child needs approximately 30 ounces of fluid per day
- Older children and adults-1 ½ to 2 ½ quarts (48-80 oz) per day

If the person **is** vomiting, do not give any liquid or food by mouth for at least 1 hour. Let the stomach rest. Next, offer a clear liquid, such as water, weak tea, ginger ale, or broth in very small amounts. Start with 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon of clear liquid every 10 minutes. If the person vomits, let the stomach rest again for an hour. Again, try to give small frequent amounts of clear liquid. When there is no vomiting, gradually increase the amount of liquid offered and use liquids that contain sugars and salts. After 6-8 hours of a liquid diet without vomiting, add solid food that is easy to digest, such as saltine crackers, dry toast, soup, mashed potatoes or rice. Gradually, return to a regular diet.

Babies who are breast-fed and vomiting can continue to nurse. Let your baby nurse more often for 4-5 minutes every 30-45 minutes or by offering small amounts (1/2 ounce or less at a time) of Pedialyte® or Lytren® every 10 minutes in a bottle.

### Oral Rehydration Solution

(For children under 3, consult a physician)

If store-bought drinks are not available, you can make your own re-hydration drink:

- 4 cups water
- 2 Tablespoons of sugar
- ½ teaspoon of salt

Use kitchen measuring spoons. It is critical to measure carefully to get the correct proportion of electrolytes.

Oral rehydration solution source: Santa Clara Valley Public Health Department. *Home Care Guide... Providing Care at Home During Pandemic Flu.* <http://www.sccgov.org>

# Caregiving

## How to Care for Someone with Influenza

Tell the person to avoid drinking alcohol and using tobacco. **Do not allow smoking in the house.**

### Watch for the Following Signs of Dehydration or Not Drinking Enough Liquids:

- Weakness or unresponsiveness.
- Decreased saliva/dry mouth and tongue.
- Sunken eyes.
- Skin tenting or turgor: check this by picking up layers of skin between your thumb and forefinger and gently pinching for 1 second. Normally, the skin will flatten out into its usual shape right away. If the person is dehydrated, the skin will “tent” or take 2 or more seconds to flatten out. This is best checked on the belly skin of a child and on the upper chest of an adult.
- Infants: dehydration symptoms would be fewer than 3 wet diapers in the last 24 hours.
- Decreased output of urine, which becomes dark yellow in color from dehydration. Ill persons who are getting enough liquids should urinate at least every 8-12 hours.
- If the ill person is dehydrated, give sips or spoonfuls of liquids frequently over a 4-hour period. Watch for an increase in urination, a lighter color of urine and improvement in the person's overall condition.

Dehydration can be dangerous for anyone but especially in infants and the elderly. Seek medical attention immediately if symptoms continue to worsen.

### Maintain a Healthy State of Mind

- Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. **Rest is important.**
- Tell your family why people might be asked to stay at home.
- Tell your family that normal reactions to a stressful event are feelings such as: nervousness, grief, anger, sleeplessness, and sadness.
- Contact a mental health professional before, during, and after an influenza outbreak or pandemic, if self help strategies are not helping or if you find that you are using drugs/alcohol in order to cope.



### For children:

- Let the child know that it is okay to feel upset when something bad or scary happens.
- Encourage the child to express feelings or thoughts, without making judgments.
- **Return to daily routines, as much as possible.**

Sources: This document was adapted and reprinted with permission of Public Health – Seattle & King County, WA. Information obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

# Caregiving

## How to Use a Thermometer

If you suspect someone has a fever, you will need to measure their temperature using a thermometer. Record the reading on a chart so you can determine if the fever is going down and so you can report it to your health care provider.

### How to take a temperature:

- Wash your hands.
- If you are using a glass thermometer, carefully shake it down until it reads 96° or lower.
- Follow the instructions on the chart below.
- After the temperature has been measured:
  - ⇒ Clean the thermometer appropriately.
    - ◊ Glass thermometers should be washed in soap and water and then wiped with alcohol.
    - ◊ Digital thermometers should be cleaned according to the manufacturer's directions.
  - ⇒ Wash your hands.
  - ⇒ Record the measurement on a chart.

Location	Instructions	Normal Range
<b>Oral</b> (in the mouth)  Types of thermometers: Digital or Glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place the tip under the tongue as far back as it can go. Close the mouth.</li><li>• For a glass thermometer, wait 3-5 minutes. For a digital thermometer, wait until it beeps.</li><li>• If the person has been eating or drinking, wait at least 20 minutes until beginning to take the temperature. Food and drink can alter the real temperature in the mouth.</li><li>• Do not use the oral method if the person is asleep.</li></ul>	97° - 99.5° F
<b>Axillary</b> (under the arm)  Types of thermometers: Digital or Glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place the tip of the thermometer into the deepest crease of the armpit. Hold the person's arm down over the tip of the thermometer.</li><li>• For a glass thermometer, wait 5 minutes. For a digital thermometer, wait until it beeps.</li></ul>	96° - 98.5° F
<b>Rectal</b> (in the anus)  Types of thermometers: Digital or Glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use lubrication such as petroleum jelly, and place the tip inside the anal opening <math>\frac{1}{4}</math> to <math>1\frac{1}{2}</math> inches depending on the person's age.</li><li>• For a glass thermometer, wait 5 minutes. For a digital thermometer, wait until it beeps.</li></ul>	98° - 100.5° F
<b>Tympanic</b> (in the ear)  Types of thermometers: Digital (specially de- signed for the ear)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pull top of the earlobe up and back for an adult and down and back for a child. Put the digital sensor (covered with a plastic probe cover) in the ear.</li><li>• Press the button until it beeps.</li><li>• Be sure to point the probe into the ear canal and not at the wall of the ear.</li><li>• If the person has an ear infection or if the probe is not pointed correctly at the ear drum, an incorrect reading may occur. Do not use on infants less than 3 months.</li></ul>	97.5° - 100° F
<b>Temporal</b> (on the forehead)  Types of thermometers: Digital (specially de- signed for the forehead)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place the probe in the middle of the forehead.</li><li>• Press the button and hold it while pulling the probe toward the hairline.</li><li>• Each brand of temporal thermometer has directions that should be followed carefully.</li></ul>	See manufacturer's instruc- tions

Duda, K. (2008). *How to use a thermometer*. Retrieved from <http://coldflu.about.com/od/medications/qt/thermometers.htm>

Smith, S. F., Duell, D. J., & Martin, B. C. (2008). *Clinical nursing skills: Basic to advanced skills* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

# Caregiving

## Personal Care Log

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Influenza Home Care Log**  
 Name of Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Time	Temp.	Observations*	Medication/Dose
/ /	: am/pm			
/ /	: am/pm			
/ /	: am/pm			
/ /	: am/pm			
/ /	: am/pm			
/ /	: am/pm			
/ /	: am/pm			
/ /	: am/pm			
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/ /	: am/pm			
/ /	: am/pm			
/ /	: am/pm			

\*Any symptoms such as coughing, confusion, how the person looks; what the person is doing; liquids or foods taken since last observation.

# Caregiving

## Guidance for Employees on Returning to Work after Influenza Illness

### Overview of Influenza (Flu) Virus Symptoms

Flu viruses are spread from person to person primarily through respiratory droplet transmission (for example when an infected person coughs or sneezes in close proximity, normally 3 feet or less, to an uninfected person). The virus may also be spread through contact with infectious or contagious respiratory secretions on the hands of an infected person or by touching objects or surfaces contaminated with the virus.

The typical incubation period, the time between when a person is first exposed to an infectious disease to when signs and symptoms develop, for seasonal influenza is 1-4 days, with an average of 2 days. Adults can be infectious from the day before symptoms begin through approximately 5-7 days after illness onset. Children can be infectious for more than 10 days after the onset of symptoms. Severely immunocompromised persons can be infectious for weeks or months.



### Current Criteria for Employees Returning to Work after Influenza Illness

Workers who have become ill with the flu should stay at home until they are well **AND** fever has resolved and has not been present for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications such as Motrin or Tylenol.

**NOTE:** During an influenza pandemic, Public Health authorities will provide information on how long persons with influenza should remain at home. Health care workers should seek guidance from CDC to determine how long to remain home after influenza illness.

Upon returning to the work environment, employees should continue to follow cough etiquette and hand washing protocols. (See *Cover Your Cough*-Prevention sheet #2).

### Criteria for Pandemic Influenza

Experts do not know whether the mode of transmission, incubation period, or contagious period of a pandemic flu virus will be similar to those of the regular seasonal influenza. Public Health - Idaho North Central District will post current updates and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on our website — please visit [www.idahopublichealth.com](http://www.idahopublichealth.com).

# Stay at Home Toolkit

## Resources

Public Health - Idaho North Central District

<http://idahopublichealth.com>

208-799-3100

American Red Cross

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

US Government Website on Pandemic Flu

[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

Santa Clara County Home Care Guide

[www.sccgov.org](http://www.sccgov.org)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

World Health Organization

[www.who.org](http://www.who.org)



# A Message From Public Health - - -



Carol M. Moehrle  
District Director

Most of us are aware of the global concerns of a pandemic influenza outbreak. Although no one knows for sure when the next pandemic will occur, or which new influenza virus will cause a pandemic, history tells us that the impact on society could be enormous.

This informational booklet is designed to help you learn to **Prevent** the spread of influenza, **Promote** an understanding of pandemic influenza, and **Protect** yourself and your family by being prepared.

The precautions we use to fight the spread of seasonal influenza each winter are the same preventive strategies we would use to fight pandemic influenza. Simple precautions to fight the flu:

- ***Cover Your Cough***
- ***Wash Your Hands***
- ***Stay Away From Sick People***, and
- ***Stay Home When You're Sick.***

Public Health finds it important to share this information with you. We take protecting the public's health seriously; I hope you will do your part to ready yourself and your family. Planning for a pandemic will take all of us working together, and together we can make a difference.

*Carol M. Moehrle*

District Director



**Public Health**  
North Central District Health Department

## Pandemic

An influenza pandemic is a global outbreak that results from the emergence of a new influenza virus that can cause serious illness in humans, and spreads easily from person to person.

## Influenza

An infection of the lungs caused by a virus that can be passed from person to person.

## Seasonal Influenza

A common form of influenza that spreads each winter. Flu shots protect many people from becoming infected.

## Avian Influenza

Also called "bird flu". A type of flu that affects poultry and wild birds. Humans can get this type of flu through close contact with infected birds.

# What You Can Do - - -

One of the most important things you can do is to help prevent the spread of the disease. Begin practicing simple but important habits that reduce the spread of germs:

## **Prevent:**

- Handwashing is the single most effective way to help keep yourself healthy.
  - ◆ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - ◆ If water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough/sneeze. Either use the inside corner of your elbow, or use a tissue and throw it away immediately. Wash your hands.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. These areas are where germs enter your body.
- Keep your living and work areas clean; sanitize with bleach or alcohol.

## **Promote:**

- Teach your family how to reduce the spread of germs.
- Be a good role model; use the prevention techniques listed above.

## **Protect:**

- Avoid sick people.
- Stay home when you are ill.
- Keep your children home from school or childcare when they are sick.
- Keep a supply of non-perishable food and bottled water at home in the event a pandemic occurs. Start slowly and build a supply, rotate as you use it.
- Keep a supply of medicines and other household items you will need if a pandemic occurs.
- Have conversations with family members about preparation planning. Aging family members, college students, and/or isolated neighbors may need to relocate during a pandemic. Your plans should include these increased numbers in your household.

Visit our website: [www.ncdhd.us](http://www.ncdhd.us)

# What Is Pandemic Influenza?

## An influenza pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a new influenza virus

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population. It causes serious illness that can be fatal and spreads easily from person-to-person, causing widespread infection. It is difficult to predict when the next influenza pandemic will occur or how severe it will be. Wherever and whenever a pandemic starts, everyone around the world is at risk.

## An influenza pandemic will be more serious than the seasonal influenza

“Seasonal” influenza is caused by small changes in the common influenza virus. Even though these viruses may change slightly from one influenza season to another, many people have developed some immunity. In a pandemic, people would have no immunity to the new virus and no vaccine would be available to prevent it. It could take months to develop and produce a vaccine that would protect against a new influenza virus. Countless numbers of people could get sick and many could die.

## Key differences between annual influenza and pandemic influenza

ANNUAL INFLUENZA	PANDEMIC INFLUENZA
Occurs every year during the winter months.	Occurs rarely — three times in the 20th century: 1918, 1957, & 1968.
Approximately 36,000 deaths per year in the United States.	The “Spanish Flu” of 1918 killed 500,000 in the U.S. and 50 million worldwide.
Most people recover within a week or two.	Usually associated with a higher severity of illness and, consequently, a higher risk of death.
Vaccination is effective because the virus strain in circulation each winter can be fairly reliably predicted.	A vaccine against pandemic influenza may not be available at the start of the pandemic. Producing an effective vaccine could take six months.
Generally causes modest impact on society (e.g., some school closures, encouragement of people who are sick to stay at home.	May cause major impact on society (e.g., widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellation of large public gatherings.

# What May Be Coming - - -

## Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic

No one knows how bad the next influenza pandemic will be, but everyone should be prepared.

- It may be difficult to get medical care. Large numbers of sick people may overwhelm hospitals and clinics. Doctors and nurses will get sick also, so hospitals and clinics may be short-staffed.
- Supplies and services will be limited. Many people will be unable to work, affecting how long businesses, banks, government offices and other services are open.
- You may be asked to stay away from others. Staying home will help stop the spread of the virus. Events may be canceled, theaters and schools closed. If necessary, health officials will issue orders to keep people who have the virus separated from others.
- Medicines for influenza symptoms may be in short supply.
- An influenza pandemic could last a long time. The 1918 influenza pandemic lasted 18 months. In some cases, pandemics weaken for a while and then recur.
- Health officials will keep you informed. They will work with the media to provide timely information and advice. Web sites from government health agencies will also have updated information.
- It is important to think about health issues that could arise if an influenza pandemic occurs, and how they could affect you and your loved ones.
- Gather family health information that includes:
  - ◊ family members' name
  - ◊ allergies
  - ◊ past and current medical conditions, and
  - ◊ current medications/dosages.

# What You Can Do - - -

## Home Care

Learn how to give basic care: know how to care for someone with a fever, body aches, and lung congestion. During an influenza pandemic you will be provided with specific instructions for caring for those who are sick as well as information about when to call a health care provider.

Learn how to recognize and treat dehydration: watch for weakness, fainting, dry mouth, dark concentrated urine, low blood pressure or a fast pulse when lying or sitting down. These are signs of dehydration. The influenza virus causes the body to lose water through fever and sweating. To prevent dehydration, it is very important for a person with the influenza to drink a lot of water.

## Practical Hygiene for Hunters

- Do not handle or field dress/clean game birds that are obviously sick or are found dead;
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while field dressing/cleaning game birds;
- Wear rubber gloves and washable clothing when cleaning game birds;
- Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately after handling game birds;
- Wash tools and working surfaces with soap and water, then disinfect with a 10 percent solution of chlorine bleach; and
- Place uncooked game birds in a plastic bag or container for transport;
- Cook game birds thoroughly; they should reach an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

## Learn More

- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare: [www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov](http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov)
- North Central District Health Department: [www.ncdhd.us](http://www.ncdhd.us)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic/)
- World Health Organization: [www.who.int/](http://www.who.int/)