



The role of Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Things will change during a pandemic. During a pandemic, Public Health will be responsible for issuing public health orders (Instructions). It will be important to keep up-to-date with the news and advice on how to avoid becoming sick.

For more information: call the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health at (800) 427-8700 or visit www.lapublichealth.org



Create a family health emergency plan. Complete this chart and post it on your refrigerator, family bulletin board or other prominent place. Make a copy and keep it in a safe place and be sure to tell all who may need to know where it is.

Key Differences Between Annual Flu And Pandemic Flu

Annual Flu	Pandemic Flu
Occurs every year during the winter months.	Has occurred three times (1918, 1957, 1968) in the last century and can take place in any season. May come in "waves" of flu activity that could be separated by months.
Affects 5-20 percent of the U.S. population.	Experts predict an infection rate of 25-50 percent of the population, depending on the severity of the virus strain.
Most people recover within a week or two.	Usually associated with a higher severity of illness and, consequently, a higher risk of death.
Deaths generally confined to risk groups, such as the elderly (over 65 years of age); the young (children aged 6-23 months); those with existing medical conditions like lung diseases, diabetes, cancer, kidney, or heart problems; and people with compromised immune systems.	All age groups may be at risk for infection, not just "high risk" groups. Otherwise fit adults could be at relatively greater risk, based on patterns of previous epidemics. For example, adults under age 35 (a key segment of the U.S. workforce) were disproportionately affected during the 1918 pandemic.
Vaccination is effective because the virus strain in circulation each winter can be fairly reliably predicted.	A vaccine against pandemic flu may not be available at the start of a pandemic. New strains of viruses must be accurately identified, and producing an effective vaccine could take six months.
Antiviral drugs are generally available for those most at risk of serious illnesses.	Antiviral drugs may be in limited supply, and their effectiveness will only be known definitively once the pandemic is underway.

STEPS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY CAN TAKE NOW TO PREPARE

Follow these steps to prevent the spread of flu and teach your children to do the same.

- Wash your hands often. This will help protect you and others against germs. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based disposable hand wash or gel sanitizers.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay home and away from other people as much as possible, to protect them from getting sick as well; get plenty of rest and check with your doctor.

Practice other good health habits.

- Keep healthy: get plenty of sleep, exercise daily, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat a balanced diet.
- Avoid smoking. Smoking may increase the risk of serious consequences if you get the flu.

Discuss important health issues with your family and loved ones.

- Talk about how/where loved ones would be cared for if they become sick and what would be needed to care for them at home.
- Make a plan for someone to care for children/people with special needs if all adults in the household are sick. Are there other family members or neighbors who can fill in? Make those plans now and discuss with all who need to know.

Have two weeks worth of medical and health supplies on hand for you and your family. Examples of supplies are:

- Soap or water free alcohol based handwash
- Medicines for fever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen
- Cough syrup
- Thermometer
- Fluids with electrolytes such as Pedialyte, Gatorade, or other oral rehydration solutions

Oral rehydration solutions are used for people who have diarrhea, vomiting or fever. These solutions contain water and salts in specific proportions to replenish both fluids and electrolytes. Oral rehydration products are readily available in most drug stores. It is important to begin giving fluids early in the course of an illness instead of waiting until the situation becomes urgent.

Prescription drugs:

If you or a family member regularly takes prescription drugs, talk to your doctor and insurance plan about having enough medicine on hand to last for several weeks.

Be prepared for shortages of food, water, and common household emergency supplies

by keeping a supply of non-perishable food items like canned goods and dry cereals, water, portable radios, batteries, flashlights, garbage bags, and manual can openers.

- Be prepared for a change in daily routine and make backup plans.
- Schools may be closed, so consider other child care options.
- Since being able to go to work may be difficult or impossible, talk to your employer about the possibility of telecommuting or working from home.
- Transportation services may be disrupted, so consider carpooling options to go to work, schools, and supermarkets.
- Other public and community services may be disrupted. These could include services provided by hospitals and other health care facilities, banks, stores, restaurants, government offices, and post offices. Think about what you and your family might do if you are cut off from these services.
- Know your work's sick leave and family and medical leave policies.
- Get an annual flu shot. Even those who are not in the high-risk categories should get a flu shot if enough vaccine is available. Those who have underlying medical conditions and everyone 65 or older should get a one-time pneumococcal vaccine.
- **DO NOT** go to work, school, or to any public place if you become sick.

A more comprehensive pandemic planning checklist for individuals and families has been developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and can be found at www.pandemicflu.gov.

CONTACTS	NAME/PHONE NUMBER
Local personal emergency contact	
Out-of-town emergency contact	
Hospitals near: Work School Home	
Family physician(s)	
Pharmacy	
Employer contact and emergency information	
School contact and emergency information	
Religious/spiritual organization	
Veterinarian	
Local Public Health Department	

It is important to think about other health issues that could arise if pandemic flu or other emergencies should occur. For example, if a mass vaccination clinic may be set up in your community, be prepared to provide information about your current and past medical history when you go, especially if you have a serious health condition or allergy.

• Keep a record of the blood type, allergies, current medications and dosages, and current and previous medical conditions of each family member. Like much of the planning for a pandemic, this can also help prepare for other emergencies. This chart should help.

Family Member	Blood Type	Allergies	Past/Current Medical Conditions	Current Medications/ Dosages



Pandemic influenza (flu) is a worldwide outbreak of a new flu virus for which there is little or no immunity (protection). Because health experts are concerned about the potential for a pandemic flu, the Los Angeles Department of Public Health wants you to know more about pandemic flu and how you can better prepare to protect yourself.

No one can predict when the next pandemic flu will occur or how severe it will be. What is known is that flu pandemics have occurred three times (1918, 1957 and 1968) in the last century. A flu pandemic occurs when a new flu virus emerges. It spreads easily from person-to-person, may cause serious illness, and can sweep across the country and around the world in a very short time. A flu pandemic may come and go in waves, each of which might last for six to eight weeks.

If the next flu pandemic to hit the U.S. is severe, life as we know it could be seriously disrupted. Businesses and schools might have to shut down. Public transportation could be limited and air flights could be cancelled. Employees may not be able to go to work and many businesses and public services may have to close or limit hours.

To protect yourself and your family, take the time to know the facts and plan ahead to be prepared.

BE PREPARED.

It is important to take steps **now** to put a plan in place to protect your loved ones during a pandemic. Some of these steps will also help you to prepare for other types of emergencies and protect yourself against seasonal flu or cold.

This brochure will help you and your family:

- Learn about pandemic flu.
- Understand the problems your family may face if a severe pandemic disrupts your normal work, school, and social routines.
- Take common sense steps to prevent the spread of germs and practice good health habits.

More information available at:

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| www.lapublichealth.org | Los Angeles County Department of Public Health |
| www.dhs.ca.gov | California Department of Health Services |
| www.cdc.gov | U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| www.pandemicflu.gov | U.S. Department of Health and Human Services |
| www.who.org | World Health Organization |
| www.redcross.org | American Red Cross |



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www.lapublichealth.org



It's Not Flu As Usual



What Individuals and Families Need to Know About

Pandemic Flu

