



PANDEMIC Influenza

This resource has been developed to help you prepare for Pandemic Influenza or other emergency situations. For more information, please see the contact information on page 2.

What is pandemic influenza?¹

Pandemic influenza is a type of influenza that occurs every few decades and that spreads rapidly to affect most countries and regions around the world.

How likely is an influenza pandemic?

Three pandemics occurred in the last century. Scientists predict that another pandemic will happen, although they cannot say exactly when that will be.

Who's at risk?

Once an influenza pandemic starts, everybody will be at risk of getting pandemic influenza. Certain groups may be at greater risk than others. Until the virus starts circulating, we will not know for sure which groups they will be.

Key Facts about Pandemic Influenza

- Until the virus is identified it is not possible to make a vaccine.
- Pandemic influenza will spread very rapidly because people will have no immunity.
- Pandemic influenza is likely to be more severe than ordinary influenza.
- Groups at particular risk won't be known until the disease starts to circulate - they may be different from those in other influenza years.
- Antivirals are being stockpiled but they have limitations - their effectiveness won't be known until the virus is circulating.

How does an influenza pandemic start?

Influenza viruses are constantly changing, producing new strains and varieties. Pandemics occur when a virus emerges that is so different from previously circulating strains that few, if any, people have any immunity to it. This allows it to spread widely and rapidly, affecting many hundreds of thousands of people. A new pandemic virus may be the result of an animal virus and a human virus mixing to produce a new strain. The animal virus usually comes from birds.

Families and Individuals Pandemic Checklist²

Planning for pandemic influenza is very important for you and your family. The following checklist has been developed to assist you in your efforts in planning for pandemic influenza. It identifies important, specific activities you can do now to prepare, many of which will also help you in other emergencies. Consider gathering a 1 - 2 week supply of food, water and medication.

Get prepared at home:

- ✓ Store emergency food supplies such as:
 - high energy foods: granola bars, fruit/nut mixture, peanut butter
 - canned goods: meat, fish, pasta, bottled sauces, soup, stew, vegetables, fruits
 - instant soup mixes, instant cereals, crackers, biscuits
 - beverages such as fruit juices, evaporated or powdered milk, UHT milk, instant coffee, tea, hot chocolate mix
 - staples such as salt, pepper, sugar, honey, syrup and jam
- ✓ Store a supply of bottled water for drinking, first aid, cooking and minor sanitation needs:
 - 1 - 2 week supply (1 - 3 liters/day/person)
- ✓ Store any non prescription medications such as pain relievers, fever medication, cough and cold medications and stomach remedies on hand.
- ✓ Talk to your doctor about getting an extra supply of regular prescription medications for you and your family members.
- ✓ Store other health supplies your family might need:
 - thermometer
 - alcohol based hand sanitizer
 - tissues
 - hot water bottle
- ✓ Assemble a first aid kit:
 - first aid book
 - antibiotic ointment
 - antiseptic (i.e. hydrogen peroxide)
 - scissors
 - cotton swabs/cotton balls
 - bandages
 - tweezers
 - pre-moistened towelettes
 - disposable gloves

Currently, there are no recommendations from Public Health for use of masks by the general public.

- ✓ Store light sources in case of power outages:
 - matches/lighters
 - camping lanterns with extra fuel
 - candles
 - flashlights (battery or crank operated)
- ✓ Also consider:
 - warm blankets
 - sufficient cash on hand
 - copies of any important papers that you may need
 - extra clothing
 - soap and dish detergent
 - contact numbers(phone and address book)
 - fire extinguisher
 - pet supplies (if applicable)
 - portable radio and extra batteries (battery or crank operated)

******Remember to check expiry dates and rotate supplies******

Protect yourself and others:

We know that keeping our hands clean helps to prevent the spread of many germs and illnesses, including influenza. During a pandemic, it will be even more important to keep your hands clean and away from your face as much as possible.

Wash with soap and water if your hands are visibly soiled, after using the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.

Clean your hands with an alcohol based hand sanitizer when your hands don't appear soiled or when access to a sink is limited. Carrying hand sanitizer in your purse or pocket makes cleaning your hands quick and easy.

Practice good respiratory etiquette: cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, dispose of the used tissue in a wastebasket and clean your hands. You can also cough or sneeze into fabric, such as your sleeve or into the crook of your elbow, preventing the spread of germs to others.

Maintain infection control practices in the workplace. For more information on hand hygiene, personal protective equipment, disinfecting, cleaning and sterilizing equipment, contact Capital Health Infection Control at 473-2659 or IWK Health Centre Infection Prevention & Control Services 470-6937.

Other things to consider in your planning:

Talk and plan with your family and other loved ones about what kind of care and supplies they might need when they get sick.

Establish an emergency communications plan for your family and revise it periodically. This plan includes identification of key contacts (with back-ups).

Create a family health information sheet with emergency contacts. The following could be included:

- Family member personal information (i.e. medical histories, allergies, regular medications)
- Emergency contact information for place of employment, school, doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, veterinarian (if applicable), local and out-of-town personal emergency contact numbers
- Accounts and policy numbers i.e. for banks and insurance
- Vehicle registration numbers
- Other important numbers i.e. ambulance, police, fire, poison control, gas & utilities, telephone, religious/spiritual centres

For more information:

Capital Health

Capital Health Occupational Health <http://cdhaintra.cdha.nshealth.ca/departmentservices/humanresources/ohealth/index.html>
Mary Bourque (902) 473-8416 and Bev MacNeil (902) 473-4773

Capital Health Infection Control (902) 473-2659 <http://cdhaintra.cdha.nshealth.ca/departmentservices/infectioncontrol/index.html>

IWK Health Centre

IWK Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness (902) 470-7949

IWK Health Centre Infection Prevention & Control Services (902) 470-6937

For IWK and Capital Health

Public Health Services (902) 481-5800 <http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca> click Public Health in the left menu

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 1-800-461-5558 www.fgiworldmembers.com Username: nsaho Password: nsaho101

Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office	http://www.gov.ns.ca/EMO/AbsPage.aspx?siteid=1&lang=1&id=1
Nova Scotia Pandemic Influenza	http://www.gov.ns.ca/govt/pandemic/
Government of Canada - Pandemic Influenza	http://www.influenza.gc.ca/
World Health Organization (WHO)	http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic.cdcreources.htm

¹ Adapted from: Government of Nova Scotia. (2006). Pandemic Influenza. <http://www.gov.ns.ca/govt/pandemic/> Accessed August 2006.

² Adapted from: Capital Health Edmonton and Area. (2006). Pandemic Influenza: Family and Individuals Checklist. [Brochure]. http://www.capitalhealth.ca/EspeciallyFor/PandemicInfluenza/Pandemic_Checklist_families Accessed August 2006.