

## **Preparing For Pandemic Influenza — What You Can Do**

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza A virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide. The federal government, states, communities and industry are taking steps to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic.

A pandemic is likely to be a prolonged and widespread outbreak that could require temporary changes in many areas of society, such as schools, work, transportation and other public services. An informed and prepared public can take appropriate actions to decrease their risk during a pandemic.

### **Communities, Businesses and Individuals Should:**

- Develop preparedness plans as you would for other public health emergencies.
- Participate and promote public health efforts in your state and community.
- Talk with your local public health officials and health care providers; they can supply information about the signs and symptoms of a specific disease outbreak.
- Implement prevention and control actions recommended by your public health officials and providers.
- Adopt business/school practices that encourage sick employees/students to stay home.
- Anticipate how to function with a significant portion of the workforce/school population absent due to illness or caring for ill family members.
- Practice good health habits, including eating a balanced diet, exercising daily, and getting sufficient rest and take these common-sense steps to stop the spread of germs.
  - Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues.
  - Stay away from others as much as possible if you are sick.
- Stay informed about pandemic influenza and be prepared to respond.
  - Consult [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) frequently for updates on national and international information on pandemic influenza.
  - Use national and local pandemic hotlines that will be established in the eventuality of a global influenza outbreak.
  - Listen to radio and television and read media stories about pandemic flu.