

## What is Pandemic Influenza?

Pandemic influenza is a worldwide outbreak of a new strain of flu virus. While many people get seasonal flu each year, some people do not get sick from it because their bodies can fight it off or they have had a yearly flu shot. But with pandemic influenza, people would not have had the strain before and a vaccine may not exist to prevent it. Hundreds of thousands of people in our country could get sick, and many could die. It is very important that we prepare for pandemic influenza.

Pandemic flu has happened before. In the 1900s there were three influenza pandemics, including the Spanish Flu of 1918, which caused at least 500,000 deaths in the U.S. and up to 40 million deaths worldwide.

Pandemic flu happens when an animal flu virus changes to a form that can be easily spread between humans. Avian flu is a virus usually found in birds, but it can sometimes make people sick, too. Health officials are concerned about the avian flu virus in Asia and Europe, because it could change and spread easily from person to person all over the world.

## Get Answers at the CT Flu Watch Website

The State of Connecticut has created a website, CT Flu Watch, at [www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch](http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch) to provide you with up-to-date information about avian and pandemic influenza. It includes what is going on around the world,

### Learn more

Connecticut Flu Watch  
[www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch](http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch)

Connecticut Department of Public Health  
[www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph)

**CT Flu Watch Website**  
**[www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch](http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch)**

or call 2-1-1 for more information

## What About Vaccines & Antiviral Medications?

A flu vaccine is given to keep you from getting the flu. Vaccines for pandemic flu will be in short supply during the pandemic and may still be limited even after the pandemic. Antiviral medications may make the flu less serious, but there are not a lot available and no one can be sure how well they will work.

Even though we don't know when a pandemic will happen or how bad it will be, federal, state, tribal, and local governments as well as private industry are getting ready for it. We want you to be prepared, too. This brochure gives you information on what you can do to stay healthy and to **Be Prepared for Pandemic Influenza.**

how Connecticut is getting ready, and what you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones. Visit this website often to **Be Prepared for Pandemic Influenza.**

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

Call 2-1-1



## "Be Prepared" Kit

Your pandemic flu preparedness kit should have enough food and personal items to last you at least two weeks. Here's a convenient list of items you should have for your pandemic flu preparedness kit:

### Food & Non-Perishables

- Canned meats, fruits, vegetables, soups
- Protein or fruit bars • Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter or nuts (for those who are not allergic)
- Dried fruit • Crackers • Canned juices
- Bottled water (at least 1 gallon per person per day)
- Canned or jarred baby food and formula
- Pet food

### Medical, Health, & Emergency Supplies

- Prescription and non-prescription medicines
- Soap and water, or alcohol-based hand wash
- Medicines for fever (acetaminophen or ibuprofen)
- Cough and cold medicines (if you have any health conditions, call your doctor first)
- Thermometer • Anti-diarrheal medication
- Cleaning supplies • Manual can opener
- Flashlight, portable radio, batteries
- Sterno-powered fondue pot for cooking
- Tissues, toilet paper, garbage bags, disposable diapers
- Face masks and gloves to protect yourself

Remember, your pandemic flu preparedness kit can be used in case of any emergency.



# Preparing for Pandemic Influenza Be Aware, Be Prepared



A personal and  
family guide



[www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch](http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch)  
or call 2-1-1

## What to Expect

A pandemic is likely to be a long and widespread outbreak that could mean short-term changes in many parts of our lives. No one knows how severe the next flu pandemic will be, but everyone should be prepared.

### When a pandemic happens—

- It might be hard to get medical care. Large numbers of sick people may be more than hospitals and clinics can handle and make it hard for them to help everybody. Many doctors and nurses may be sick, too.
- Supplies and services may be limited. Many people may not be able to work, affecting how long businesses, grocery stores, banks, government offices and other services are open.
- You may be asked to stay home to limit the spread of the flu.
- Services like power, water, and garbage collection may not be available because of staff shortages.
- Medicines for flu may be in short supply.
- It may be hard to travel. Routes and schedules for buses, trains or planes may change or be restricted. Gasoline may be in short supply.



## What to Do

### Stay Healthy

- Make sure your health is as good as it can be to help fight off the flu. Eat a balanced diet, exercise daily, and get plenty of rest.

Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (like Purell™) after sneezing or coughing. Washing your hands helps protect you from the flu virus and other germs.

- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. People often get the flu when they touch something that has the virus on it and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Clean common contact surfaces (telephones, countertops, doorknobs) on a regular basis with a disinfectant, like Lysol™.
- Cough into your upper sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.
- Try to stay home when you are sick. If you have to be around others, stay as far away from them as you can.

### Have a Plan for Your Household & Family

- Develop preparedness plans like you would for other emergencies.
- Agree on a place where all family members can check in if you are separated during an emergency.

Know school and workplace rules about illnesses and being absent.

- Decide ahead of time who will take care of your children if schools are closed.
- Think about how you would care for people in your family who have disabilities or special needs if support services are not available.
- Help elderly neighbors or those with special needs.



### Stock Your Home for Emergencies

- Stock up on food and water. Have enough per person for at least two weeks.
- Choose foods that will keep for a long time and do not require refrigeration or cooking.
- Have a manual can opener in case the power is out.

Have on hand at least two weeks' supply of prescription and nonprescription drugs and other health supplies that you use daily or often.

- Stock up on items to help flu symptoms such as medicines for fever (ibuprofen and acetaminophen), cold packs, blankets, humidifiers, extra water and fruit juices.
- Keep at least two weeks' supply of soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toilet paper and cleaning products in stock.
- Have activities for yourself and your children that do not need electricity, like books, crafts, board games and art supplies.
- Have enough cash in small bills available for grocery shopping since banks may not be open and cash machines may not work.

Remember your pets! Stock up on pet supplies.

- Have a cell phone and regular phone with a cord. Cordless phones will not work if the power is out.
- Have large trash bags for garbage storage since garbage service may be delayed or not available for many days.



### Promote Public Health Efforts in Your Business & Community

- Plan for getting essential work done with fewer people and be prepared and willing to perform duties that are not usually part of your job.
- Explore with your employer/employees other ways to get your work done.
- Know company rules about sick leave, absences, time off and working from home.

Stay home from work when you are sick.

- Volunteer with local groups to prepare and help with emergency response.
- Contact your local health department to talk about your community's preparedness plans.

State and local governments are working on putting plans in place for pandemic flu. To volunteer and help your community be prepared for pandemic flu, call your local health department.

