



# **School Guidance During an Influenza Pandemic**

December 2006

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## School Guidance during an Influenza Pandemic

*This publication, adapted from Contra Costa County, California Health Services, serves as a guide to important pandemic issues, solutions, and communications for schools. However, it is not the intention of the Illinois Department of Public Health or the Illinois State Board of Education to negate any of the important work that districts and schools may already have completed. As such, this guide is not intended to replace your existing pandemic plans, but to supplement the efforts that districts and schools have already undertaken.*

Opening Letter from Dr. Randy J. Dunn and Dr. Eric E. Whitaker

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# Illinois State Board of Education

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**Rod Blagojevich**  
Governor

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Chairman

**Dr. Randy J. Dunn**  
State Superintendent of Education

November 2006

Dear School Official,

The enclosed guide is designed to provide the tools needed to prepare for a potential pandemic influenza outbreak. The Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Department of Public Health want to help schools proactively plan for and ease the possible effects of a pandemic. Like you, our first concern is the health and safety of children.

As you work to develop your plans, we ask you to keep in mind the very important distinction between seasonal influenza and pandemic influenza. Seasonal influenza is the reoccurring emergence of general flu viruses. A pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a disease for which there is little or no natural immunity. During an influenza pandemic, a new strand of influenza will cause thousands or even millions of people to contract the disease and, in turn, spread the illness to others.

While there is no pandemic influenza in the United States at this time, history tells us that another pandemic will almost certainly occur. Currently, scientists and public health officials are concerned that the H5N1 strand of influenza, also known as avian or "bird" flu, may mutate to allow for easy human to human transmission, creating the likelihood for a pandemic. Whether or not the bird flu will be the cause of the world's next pandemic, we must prepare for the possibility.

Federal, state, and local units of government have been working together to get schools accurate, timely, and meaningful information about pandemic influenza and the potential for such an event to occur in the United States. The enclosed guide includes information and tools to guide schools, districts and local authorities in creating and maintaining contact with parents and the community in the event of a pandemic.

In the case of a pandemic, any local decision for emergency school closing should be made by the local district in consultation with and, if necessary, at the direction of your local health department, emergency management agencies, and Regional Office of Education.

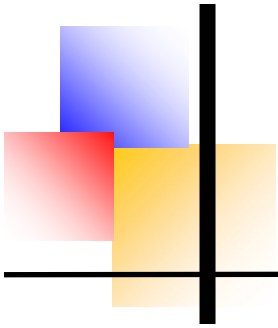
We hope this guide will assist you in your planning as you integrate pandemic planning into your existing emergency plans and operational procedures.

Sincerely,

Dr. Randy J. Dunn  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education

Dr. Eric E. Whitaker  
Director, Illinois Department of Public Health

# **Section I – The Planning Process**



## School Action Steps for Pandemic Planning

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*The following is a list of important step-by-step actions schools should take before a pandemic influenza outbreak. Such an outbreak may have several cycles or waves so this list may need to be repeated.*

- Create a pandemic flu plan (Use the CDC School Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist in this guide).
  - Work with local health and emergency preparedness officials. They may want to use the schools as a way to disseminate information to families (See Parent Information and Community Outreach section).
  - Train nurses and staff in flu-symptom recognition (See Surveillance section). Remember that a person who is infected does not show symptoms right away. But children who are getting ill may show different behavior than usual, such as eating less or being irritable.
  - Insure that standard surveillance/disease recognition procedures are in place and implemented. (See Surveillance section).
  - Improve the hygiene of students and staff. Use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of flu by “cough and sneeze etiquette,” clean hands, and clean work areas. (See Parent Information and Community Outreach section).
  - Decide to what extent you will encourage or require children and staff to stay home when they are mildly ill.
  - Identify students who are most vulnerable to serious illness (immune compromised, chronic illness, etc.).
  - Review the health needs of students. Some students may have a greater risk of infections. Encourage those families to talk to their health care provider. Some parents may need to be more cautious in keeping their children out of school.
  - Through consultation with your regional office of education and local authorities, develop alternative learning strategies such as collaborative agreements (television or other local cable stations, teleconferencing, lessons on CDs, etc.).
  - Educate staff, students and parents about: the differences between seasonal flu, bird flu and pandemic flu; best hygienic practices to prevent any sort of flu; what could occur in a pandemic (See Fact Sheets section).
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# SCHOOL DISTRICT (K-12) PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING CHECKLIST



Local educational agencies (LEAs) play an integral role in protecting the health and safety of their district’s staff, students and their families. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed the following checklist to assist LEAs in developing and/or improving plans to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic.

Building a strong relationship with the local health department is critical for developing a meaningful plan. The key planning activities in this checklist build upon existing contingency plans recommended for school districts by the U.S. Department of Education (Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide For Schools and Communities <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>).

Further information on pandemic influenza can be found at [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov).

## 1. Planning and Coordination:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the authority responsible for declaring a public health emergency at the state and local levels and for officially activating the district’s pandemic influenza response plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify for all stakeholders the legal authorities responsible for executing the community operational plan, especially those authorities responsible for case identification, isolation, quarantine, movement restriction, healthcare services, emergency care, and mutual aid.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As part of the district’s crisis management plan, address pandemic influenza preparedness, involving all relevant stakeholders in the district (e.g., lead emergency response agency, district administrators, local public health representatives, school health and mental health professionals, teachers, food services director, and parent representatives). This committee is accountable for articulating strategic priorities and overseeing the development of the district’s operational pandemic plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with local and/or state health departments and other community partners to establish organizational structures, such as the Incident Command System, to manage the execution of the district’s pandemic flu plan. An Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized organization structure that establishes a line of authority and common terminology and procedures to be followed in response to an incident. Ensure compatibility between the district’s established ICS and the local/state health department’s and state education department’s ICS.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Delineate accountability and responsibility as well as resources for key stakeholders engaged in planning and executing specific components of the operational plan. Assure that the plan includes timelines, deliverables, and performance measures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with your local and/or state health department and state education agencies to coordinate with their pandemic plans. Assure that pandemic planning is coordinated with the community’s pandemic plan as well as the state department of education’s plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Test the linkages between the district’s Incident Command System and the local/state health department’s and state education department’s Incident Command System.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contribute to the local health department’s operational plan for surge capacity of healthcare and other services to meet the needs of the community (e.g., schools designated as contingency hospitals, schools feeding vulnerable populations, community utilizing LEA’s healthcare and mental health staff). In an affected community, at least two pandemic disease waves (about 6-8 weeks each) are likely over several months.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incorporate into the pandemic influenza plan the requirements of students with special needs (e.g., low income students who rely on the school food service for daily meals), those in special facilities (e.g., juvenile justice facilities) as well as those who do not speak English as their first language.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in exercises of the community’s pandemic plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with the local health department to address provision of psychosocial support services for the staff, students and their families during and after a pandemic.

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### 1. Planning and Coordination (cont.):

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Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider developing in concert with the local health department a surveillance system that would alert the local health department to a substantial increase in absenteeism among students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Implement an exercise/drill to test your pandemic plan and revise it periodically.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share what you have learned from developing your preparedness and response plan with other LEAs as well as private schools within the community to improve community response efforts.

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### 2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations:

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Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop scenarios describing the potential impact of a pandemic on student learning (e.g., student and staff absences), school closings, and extracurricular activities based on having various levels of illness among students and staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop alternative procedures to assure continuity of instruction (e.g., web-based distance instruction, telephone trees, mailed lessons and assignments, instruction via local radio or television stations) in the event of district school closures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a continuity of operations plan for essential central office functions including payroll and ongoing communication with students and parents.

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### 3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures:

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Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with the local health department to implement effective infection prevention policies and procedures that help limit the spread of influenza at schools in the district (e.g. promotion of hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette). Make good hygiene a habit now in order to help protect children from many infectious diseases such as flu.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies (e.g., soap, alcohol-based/waterless hand hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies and procedures for students and staff sick leave absences unique to a pandemic influenza (e.g., non-punitive, liberal leave).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish sick leave policies for staff and students suspected to be ill or who become ill at school. Staff and students with known or suspected pandemic influenza should not remain at school and should return only after their symptoms resolve and they are physically ready to return to school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies for transporting ill students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assure that the LEA pandemic plan for school-based health facilities conforms to those recommended for health care settings (Refer to <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan">www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan</a> ).

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### 4. Communications Planning:

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Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assess readiness to meet communication needs in preparation for an influenza pandemic, including regular review, testing, and updating of communication plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a dissemination plan for communication with staff, students, and families, including lead spokespersons and links to other communication networks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure language, culture and reading level appropriateness in communications by including community leaders representing different language and/or ethnic groups on the planning committee, asking for their participation both in document planning and the dissemination of public health messages within their communities.

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#### 4. Communications Planning (cont.):

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop and test platforms (e.g., hotlines, telephone trees, dedicated websites, and local radio or TV stations) for communicating pandemic status and actions to school district staff, students, and families.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop and maintain up-to-date communications contacts of key public health and education stakeholders and use the network to provide regular updates as the influenza pandemic unfolds.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assure the provision of redundant communication systems/channels that allow for the expedited transmission and receipt of information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advise district staff, students and families where to find up-to-date and reliable pandemic information from federal, state and local public health sources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate information about the LEA's pandemic influenza preparedness and response plan (e.g., continuity of instruction, community containment measures).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate information from public health sources covering routine infection control (e.g., hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette), pandemic influenza fundamentals (e.g., signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission) as well as personal and family protection and response strategies (e.g., guidance for the at-home care of ill students and family members).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anticipate the potential fear and anxiety of staff, students, and families as a result of rumors and misinformation and plan communications accordingly.



# CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOL PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING CHECKLIST



A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges that people have little or no immunity to and for which there may be no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person and causes serious illness. It can sweep across the country and around the world very quickly. It is hard to predict when the next flu pandemic will occur or how bad it will be.

Child care and preschool programs can help protect the health of their staff and the children and families they serve. Interruptions in child care services during an influenza (flu) pandemic may cause conflicts for working parents that could result in high absenteeism in workplaces. Some of that absenteeism could be expected to affect personnel and workplaces that are critical to the emergency response system. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer this checklist to help programs prepare for the effects of a flu pandemic. Many of these steps can also help in other types of emergencies. More information on pandemic flu is available at [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov).

## 1. Planning and Coordination:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Form a committee of staff members and parents to produce a plan for dealing with a flu pandemic. Include members from all different groups your program serves. Include parents who do not speak English who can help contact other non-English speakers in the community. Staff of very small programs might consider joining together with other similar programs for planning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign one person to identify reliable sources of information and watch for public health warnings about flu, school closings, and other actions taken to prevent the spread of flu.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn who in your area has legal authority to close child care programs if there is a flu emergency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn whether the local/state health departments and agencies that regulate child care have plans. Be sure your flu plan is in line with their plans. Tell them if you can help support your community's plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify all the ways a flu pandemic might affect your program and develop a plan of action. (For example, you might have problems with food service, transportation, or staffing.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage parents to have a "Plan B" for finding care for their children if the program is closed during a flu pandemic. Give them ideas about where they might seek help based on your knowledge of the local child care community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with those in charge of your community's plan to find other sources of meals for low-income children who receive subsidized meals while in your care. (For example, locate food pantries and meals on wheels.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn about services in your area that can help your staff, children, and their families deal with stress and other problems caused by a flu pandemic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stage a drill to test your plan and then improve it as needed. Repeat the drill from time to time. Consider volunteering to help in tests of community plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Talk to other child care and preschool programs in your area to share information that could make your plan better. Discuss ways programs could work together to produce a stronger plan and pool resources.

## 2. Student Learning and Program Operations:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan how you would deal with program closings, staff absences, and gaps in student learning that could occur during a flu pandemic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan ways to help families continue their child's learning if your child care program or preschool is closed. (For example, give parents things they can teach at home. Tell them how to find ideas on the internet. Talk with child care resource referral agencies or other groups that could help parents continue their children's learning at home.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan ways to continue basic functions if your program is closed. (For example, continue meeting payroll and keeping in touch with staff and student's families.)

### 3. Infection Control Policies and Actions:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Give special attention to teaching staff, children, and their parents on how to limit the spread of infection. (For example, use good hand washing; cover the mouth when coughing or sneezing; clean toys frequently.) Programs should already be teaching these things to build habits that protect children from disease. (See <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/">www.cdc.gov/flu/school/</a> and <a href="http://www.healthykids.us/cleanliness.htm">www.healthykids.us/cleanliness.htm</a> .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep a good supply of things you will need to help control the spread of infection. (For example, keep on hand plenty of soap, paper towels, and tissues.) Store the supplies in easy-to-find places.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tell families that experts recommend yearly flu shots for all children 6 months to 5 years old and for anyone who cares of children in that age range. (See <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r060223.htm">www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r060223.htm</a> .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage staff to get flu shots each year. (See <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm">www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm</a> .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tell parents to let your program know if their children are sick. Keep accurate records of when children or staff are absent. Include a record of the kind of illness that caused the absence (e.g., diarrhea/vomiting, coughing/breathing problems, rash, or other). (See <a href="http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/XMLVersion/Chapter_3.xml">http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/XMLVersion/Chapter_3.xml</a> .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teach staff a standard set of steps for checking children and adults each day as they arrive to see if they are sick. Make it clear that any child or adult who is ill will not be admitted. (See <a href="http://www.healthykids.us/chapters/sick_main.htm">www.healthykids.us/chapters/sick_main.htm</a> .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have a plan for keeping children who become sick at your program away from other children until the family arrives, such as a fixed place for a sick room. (See <a href="http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/XMLVersion/Chapter_3.xml">http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/XMLVersion/Chapter_3.xml</a> .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Require staff members to stay home if they think they might be sick. If they become sick while at the program, require them to go home and stay home. Give staff paid sick leave so they can stay home without losing wages.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Require ill staff and students to stay at home until their flu symptoms are gone and they feel ready to come back to work.

### 4. Communications Planning:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have a plan for keeping in touch with staff members and students' families. Include several different methods of contacting them. (For example, you might use hotlines, telephone trees, text messaging, special Websites, local radio and/or TV stations.) Test the contact methods often to be sure they work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make sure staff and families have seen and understand your flu pandemic plan. Explain why you need to have a plan. Give them a chance to ask questions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Give staff and students' families reliable information on the issues listed below in their languages and at their reading levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How to help control the spread of flu by hand washing/cleansing and covering the mouth when coughing or sneezing. (See <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/">www.cdc.gov/flu/school/</a>.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How to recognize a person that may have the flu, and what to do if they think they have the flu. (See <a href="http://www.pandemicflu.gov">www.pandemicflu.gov</a>.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How to care for ill family members. (See <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/sup5.html#box4">www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/sup5.html#box4</a>.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How to develop a family plan for dealing with a flu pandemic. (See <a href="http://www.pandemicflu.gov/planguide/">www.pandemicflu.gov/planguide/</a>.)</li> </ul>

*Throughout an influenza pandemic, people may be asked or required to do things to help hold back the spread of the disease in your community. Here are some examples of what local health departments may ask you to do:*

### **STAY HOME**

People who are sick should stay home. Children should not go to school if they are sick. Staying home will be absolutely necessary during a pandemic flu to limit the spread of the disease.

### **AVOID LARGE GROUPS**

People – even those who are well – should stay away from gatherings of people such as sporting events, movies and festivals. During a pandemic flu these kinds of events could be cancelled because large gatherings of people help spread the flu virus.

### **ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE**

Isolation and Quarantine are public health actions used to contain the spread of a contagious disease. If asked, it will be important to follow Isolation and/or Quarantine instructions.

**Isolation** is for people who are already ill. When someone is isolated, they are separated from people who are healthy. Having the sick person isolated (separated from others) can help to slow or stop the spread of disease. People who are isolated can be cared for in their homes, in hospitals, or other healthcare facilities. Isolation is usually voluntary, but local, state and federal government have the power to require the isolation of sick people to protect the public.

**Quarantine** is for people who have been exposed to the disease but are not sick. When someone is placed in quarantine, they are also separated from others. Even though the person is not sick at the moment, they were exposed to the disease and may still become infectious and then spread the disease to others. Quarantine can help to slow or stop this from happening. States generally have the power to enforce quarantines within their borders.

# Pandemic Influenza:

## CHARACTERISTICS & CHALLENGES

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, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide.

### Historically, the 20th century saw three pandemics of influenza:

- 1918 influenza pandemic caused at least 500,000 U.S. deaths and up to 50 million deaths worldwide
- 1957 influenza pandemic caused at least 70,000 U.S. deaths and 1-2 million deaths worldwide
- 1968 influenza pandemic caused about 34,000 U.S. deaths and 700,000 deaths worldwide

### Characteristics and Challenges in a Pandemic:

#### 1. There Will Be Rapid Worldwide Spread

- When a pandemic influenza virus emerges, its global spread is considered inevitable.
- Preparedness activities should assume that the entire world population would be susceptible.
- Countries might, through measures such as border closures and travel restrictions, delay arrival of the virus, but cannot stop it.

#### 2. Health Care Systems Will Be Overloaded

- Most people have little or no immunity to a pandemic virus. Infection and illness rates soar. A substantial percentage of the world's population will require some form of medical care.
- Nations unlikely to have the staff, facilities, equipment and hospital beds needed to cope with large numbers of people who suddenly fall ill.
- Death rates are high, largely determined by four factors: the number of people who become infected, the virulence of the virus, the underlying characteristics and vulnerability of affected populations and the effectiveness of preventive measures.
- Past pandemics have spread globally in two and sometimes three waves.

#### 3. Medical Supplies Will Be Inadequate

- The need for vaccine is likely to outstrip supply.
- The need for antiviral drugs is also likely to be inadequate early in a pandemic.
- A pandemic can create a shortage of hospital beds, ventilators and other supplies. Surge capacity at non-traditional sites such as schools may be created to cope with demand
- Difficult decisions will need to be made regarding who gets antiviral drugs and vaccines.

#### 4. There Will Be Economic and Social Disruption

- Travel bans, closings of schools and businesses and cancellations of events could have major impact on communities and citizens.
- Care for sick family members and fear of exposure can result in significant worker absenteeism.



## FACT SHEET

### Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

#### How Germs Spread

The main way that illnesses like colds and flu are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This is called "droplet spread."

This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Sometimes germs also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.

#### How to Stop the Spread of Germs

In a nutshell: take care to

- Cover your mouth and nose
- Clean your hands often
- Remind your children to practice healthy habits, too

#### *Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing*

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

#### *The "Happy Birthday" song helps keep your hands clean?*

Not exactly. Yet we recommend that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. That's about the same time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice!

#### *Alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers work too*

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.\*

\* Source: FDA/CFSAN Food Safety A to Z Reference Guide, September 2001: [Handwashing](#).

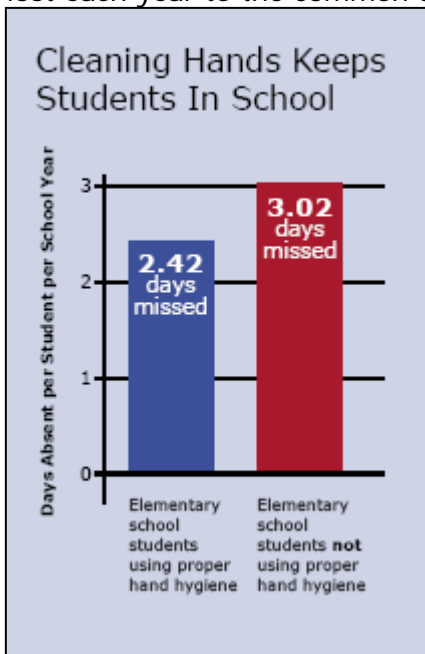
#### Germs and Children

Remind children to practice healthy habits too, because germs spread, especially at school.

## Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

(continued from previous page)

The flu has caused high rates of absenteeism among students and staff in our country's 119,000 schools. Influenza is not the only respiratory infection of concern in schools -- nearly 22 million school days are lost each year to the common cold alone. However, when children practice healthy habits, they miss fewer days of school.



School administrators, teachers and staff: See [Preventing the Spread of Influenza \(the Flu\) in Schools](#) for CDC interim guidance.

### More Facts, Figures, and How-Tos

CDC and its partner agencies and organizations offer a great deal of information about handwashing and other things you can do to stop the germs that cause flu, the common cold, and other illnesses. See [Other Resources](#) and [Posters](#) on this [Stop the Spread of Germs](#) site for a select listing of Web sites, materials, and contact information.

Source: Am J Infect Control 2000;28: 340-6.

### Stop the Spread of Germs in Schools

#### Fast Facts

- Approximately 1/5 of the U.S. population attends or works in schools. (U.S. Dept of Ed, 1999).
- Some viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes up to 2 hours or more on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. (Ansari, 1988; Scott and Bloomfield, 1989)
- Nearly 22 million school days are lost annually due to the common cold alone. (CDC, 1996)
- Addressing the spread of germs in schools is essential to the health of our youth, our schools, and our nation.
- Students need to get plenty of sleep and physical activity, drink water, and eat good food to help them stay healthy in the winter and all year.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu), or call the CDC Flu Information Line at (800) CDC-INFO.

February 1, 2004

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## **Section II – Parent Information and Community Outreach**



## **SAMPLE PARENT LETTER#1—Preparation and Planning**

Dear Parents,

This letter will help your family prepare for a flu pandemic that could make many people sick.

It is important to know that at this time, there is no pandemic flu of any kind in the United States. There is also no bird/avian flu in the United States at this time.

Public health officials are worried the avian/bird flu virus may change so that it can infect people and spread easily from person-to-person. This would cause a worldwide flu outbreak, called a pandemic.

Public health officials want people to protect themselves against pandemic flu.

Here are some ways to protect your family:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands a lot with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are better.

Enclosed with this letter is a checklist to help families get ready for a pandemic flu outbreak. This information can also help your family get ready for any kind of emergency.

**If you have questions, please contact your healthcare provider, school nurse, or your local public health department (INSERT LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT INFORMATION HERE).**

### **Illinois Department of Public Health**

Visit online at [www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us) or call the Health Emergency Information Line: 217-782-4977

### **Federal Government Information**

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

### **American Red Cross**

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

## **SAMPLE PARENT LETTER #2—First Bird Case**

Dear Parents,

As expected, birds infected with the avian/bird flu virus are now in the United States. It is important to know that, at this time, there are no known human cases of avian/bird flu in the United States.

Health officials are worried that the avian/bird flu virus may change in a way that infects people. Such a development could lead to person-to-person spread of the disease. This would cause a worldwide flu outbreak, called a pandemic. Therefore, even though currently there is no flu pandemic, we should be aware of the potential impact that this disease could have. As such, we would like to remind you about some ways to protect your family from getting sick:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands a lot with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are better.
- Do not touch sick or dead birds

Enclosed with this letter is a checklist to help families get ready for a pandemic flu outbreak. This information can also help your family get ready for any kind of emergency.

**If you have questions, please contact your healthcare provider, school nurse or your local public health department (INSERT INFORMATION HERE).**

### **Illinois Department of Public Health**

Visit online at [www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us) or call the Health Emergency Information Line: 217-782-4977

### **Federal government information**

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

### **American Red Cross**

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

## **SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS #3—Illinois/Regional Cases**

Dear Parents,

This letter will give you information about a flu outbreak in Illinois. Every year, some people get sick with the flu during the fall and winter months. This year, there is a new flu virus that is making many people in the state of Illinois sick. So many people are sick in Illinois and the United States that health officials call it a “pandemic flu.”

At this time, the county health department tells us that students who are not ill can safely come to school. The schools will remain open. We will keep you updated with any important information.

**To keep the flu from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children home. Any children who are sick in school will be sent home.**

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against pandemic flu. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands a lot with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay away at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and stay away from other people until they are better.
- Stay away from shopping malls, movie theaters or other places where there are large groups of people.

We are also giving you some tips about how to care for your family if they are ill.

If you have questions, please contact your School Nurse or healthcare provider. You can call the school hotline (INSERT NUMBER). You can get more information from your local public health department (INSERT HEALTH DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION).

If the pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, schools may close for days or weeks. The purpose of closing schools will be to keep children from getting sick. If schools are closed, children should stay at home. Begin planning now for childcare in your home.

Recommendations may change during the course of a pandemic flu outbreak.

## **SAMPLE LETER TO PARENTS #4—School Closures**

Dear Parents,

Local public health department officials have ordered all schools in (INSERT GEOGRAPHIC REGION) to close. This order is in response to the pandemic flu situation in our community. All schools are immediately closed until further notice and children should stay home.

Schools may be closed for days or even weeks to reduce contact among children and stop the spread of the flu.

We know that many students and their families are very sick. We know this is a hard time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill.

Because the flu is easily spread from person-to-person, it is not safe for large groups of people to gather. During this time, both children and adults should stay away from other people and groups as much as possible. They should not gather in other locations such as shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.

We know that it may be hard to get a doctor's appointment, go to a clinic or even be seen in a hospital emergency room. Here are some tips for helping those who are sick with the flu:

- Have them drink a lot of liquid (juice, water).
- Keep the sick person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.
- Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently.
- Keep the people who are sick with the flu away from the people who are not sick.

For more information, call your healthcare provider or contact your local public health department (INSERT DATA HERE).

We will contact you as soon as we have information about when school will reopen.

## **SAMPLE LETER TO PARENTS #5—Schools Reopen**

Dear Parents,

Local public health officials have determined that local incidents of pandemic flu are under control. Our school will open again on \_\_\_\_\_. At this time, students may safely return to class.

Even though school is opening, there are still some people who are sick from the flu virus. Furthermore, health officials say that pandemic flu outbreaks sometimes happen in waves. This means more people could become sick soon again. If more people get sick, schools may need to close again. We will continue to give you any important information.

Because the flu can still be spread from person-to-person, please keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.

We are looking forward to seeing your children again.

## **Tips for Parents**

### **Plan for an extended stay at home during a flu pandemic:**

- Ask your employer about how business will continue during a pandemic.
- Ask your employer if you can work from home during a flu pandemic.
- If you are unable to work or your place of employment is closed, plan for a possible reduction or loss of income.
- Check with your employer or union about leave policies.
- Plan home learning activities and exercises. Have materials such as books on hand.
- Plan recreational activities that your children can do at home.

### **If someone in your home develops flu symptoms (fever, cough, muscle aches):**

- Encourage plenty of fluids to drink.
- Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For adults with fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol).
- Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome.
- Sponging with tepid water lowers fever only during the period of sponging.
- Do not sponge with alcohol.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag for their disposal within reach of the patient.
- All members of the household should wash their hands frequently.
- Keep other family members and visitors away from the person who is ill.
- If the ill person is having difficulty breathing or is getting worse, contact the healthcare provider right away.
- Contact a healthcare provider for further advice

Please contact your local public health department for more information.

## **Items for an Extended Stay at Home**

### **•Non-Perishable Foods**

Ready to eat canned foods  
Protein or fruit bars  
Dry cereal or granola  
Peanut butter and jelly  
Dried fruit, nuts, and trail mix  
Crackers  
Canned juices  
Bottled water  
Canned or jarred baby food  
Baby Formula  
Pet food

### **•Health and Emergency Supplies**

Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring  
Soap and water or alcohol based hand wash  
Medicines for fever such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen  
Thermometer  
Vitamins  
Fluids with electrolytes, such as Pedialyte®  
Flashlight with extra batteries  
Portable radio with extra batteries  
Manual can opener  
Garbage bags  
Tissues  
Toilet paper  
Disposable diapers  
Pet supplies

We recommend that every family create a disaster kit for use during an emergency. Please visit [www.readyillinois.gov](http://www.readyillinois.gov) or contact your local public health department for more information.



# Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist for Individuals & Families

You can prepare for an influenza pandemic now. You should know both the magnitude of what can happen during a pandemic outbreak and what actions you can take to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. This checklist will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

## ***1. To plan for a pandemic:***

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- Store a two week supply of water and food. During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Have nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.
- Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency response.
- Get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic.

## ***2. To limit the spread of germs and prevent infection:***

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- Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water, and model the current behavior.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, and be sure to model that behavior.
- Teach your children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick. Stay home from work and school if sick.





### 3. Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:

Examples of food and non-perishables	Examples of medical, health, and emergency supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, and soups</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Protein or fruit bars</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dry cereal or granola</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter or nuts</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dried Fruit</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Crackers</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Canned juices</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Bottled water</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Canned or jarred baby food and formula</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Pet food</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Other nonperishable foods</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Soap and water, or alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Anti-diarrheal medication</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Fluids with electrolytes</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cleansing agent/soap</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Batteries</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Portable radio</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Manual can opener</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Garbage bags</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers</li></ul>

**PandemicFlu.gov**



**AvianFlu.gov**



## What is Pandemic Flu?

A “pandemic” is a disease that spreads all over the world and affects a large number of people. If you are caring for a loved one during a pandemic, it’s important to take steps to protect yourself and others. Always follow the most current advice of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and your local health department.

## Prevent the Spread of Pandemic Flu

These healthy habits will help keep you and others from getting and passing on the virus.

- > Clean your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- > Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and clean your hands afterward. Put used tissues in a wastebasket.
- > Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don’t have a tissue.
- > Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth to prevent germs from entering your body.

Also, a person with signs of the flu should:

- > Stay home from work, school and errands and avoid contact with others.
- > Consider wearing a surgical mask when around others. There may be benefits.

## When a Household Member Is Sick

The flu virus is spread when contaminated droplets exit the mouth and nose of an infected person and the virus comes in contact with others. So, follow these tips to protect yourself and others in your home:

- > Keep everyone’s personal items separate. All household members should avoid sharing computers, pens, papers, clothes, towels, sheets, blankets, food or eating utensils.
- > Disinfect door knobs, switches, handles, toys and other surfaces that are commonly touched around the home or workplace.

### Disinfectant:

1 gallon water  
¼ cup bleach

Mix up a fresh batch every time you use it.

- > It is okay to wash everyone’s dishes and clothes together. Use detergent and very hot water. Wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.
- > Wear disposable gloves when in contact with or cleaning up body fluids.
- > One person should be the caregiver. He or she may benefit by wearing a mask when giving care.

## Practice Hand Hygiene

Caregivers should always wash their hands before providing care. Afterward, wash again and apply alcohol-based hand sanitizer as well. Follow these steps for proper hand hygiene:

1. Wet hands with warm, running water and apply liquid soap.
2. Rub hands vigorously for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces and fingers.
3. Scrub nails by rubbing them against the palms of your hands.
4. Rinse your hands with water.
5. Dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel and use it to turn off the faucet. A shared towel will spread germs.

## Recognize Pandemic Flu Symptoms

Watch for these symptoms:

- > Fever
- > Cough
- > Runny nose
- > Muscle pain

Call your health-care professional at the first sign of the flu. Many symptoms can be treated by the health-care professional over the telephone.

## Care for a Loved One with the Flu

A person recovering from flu should have:

- > Rest and plenty of liquids
- > No alcohol or tobacco
- > Medications to relieve flu symptoms

In some cases, a health-care professional may prescribe antiviral drugs to treat the flu. Antibiotics (like penicillin) don’t cure it.

## Monitor Pandemic Flu Symptoms

Keep a care log. Write down the date, time, fever, symptoms, medicines given and dosage. Make a new entry at least every 4 hours or when the symptoms change. Call your healthcare professional again if your loved one has:

- > A high fever
  - Children and Adults:  
Greater than 105°F (40.5°C)
  - Babies 3- to 24-months-old:  
103°F (39.4°C) or higher.
  - Babies up to 3 months:  
Rectal temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- > Shaking chills
- > Coughing that produces thick mucus
- > Dehydration (feeling of dry mouth or excessive thirst)
- > Worsening of an existing serious medical condition (for example: heart or lung disease, diabetes, HIV, cancer)

If you cannot reach your health-care professional, **call 9-1-1** or local emergency number for any of the signs below:

- > Irritability and/or confusion
- > Difficult breathing or chest pain with each breath
- > Bluish skin
- > Stiff neck
- > Inability to move an arm or leg
- > First-time seizure

## Prevent Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when the body loses too much water and it's not replaced quickly enough. It can be serious. Begin giving soothing drinks at the first signs of the flu and follow these tips:

- > In addition to plenty of liquids, give ice and light, easily digested foods, such as soup and broth.

- > If your loved one has diarrhea or vomiting, give fluids that contain electrolytes. These are available at your pharmacy or grocery store. Or you can make your own rehydration electrolyte drink for someone over the age of 12.

### Electrolyte Drink:

1 quart water  
½ tsp. baking soda  
½ tsp. table salt  
3 to 4 tbsp. sugar  
¼ tsp. salt substitute  
Mix well and flavor with lemon juice or sugar-free Kool-Aid®.

- > If drinking liquids makes nausea worse, give one sip at a time until your loved one can drink again.

## Reduce Fever

To help reduce a fever, do the following:

- > Give plenty of fluids.
- > Give fever-reducing medication, such as acetaminophen, aspirin or ibuprofen, as directed on the container's label.  
Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20.
- > Keep a record of your loved one's temperature in your care log.
- > To relieve discomfort, give a sponge bath with lukewarm water.

After you have called your doctor or emergency number for a fever, continue to follow the home treatment recommendations above. If there is a delay in getting help, ask a health-care professional if you should start an additional dose of an alternate fever-reducing medication (acetaminophen, ibuprofen or aspirin) between the doses described on the label. Always continue to give plenty of fluids.

## Prepare for a Flu Pandemic

Make a plan now for a flu pandemic. Figure out what you will do if members of your household have to stay home from work or school or stay separated from others for a period of time. Keep extra supplies of food, water, medications and your disaster supply kit on hand.

### Pandemic Flu Caregiving Supplies:

- > Thermometer
- > Soap
- > Box of disposable gloves
- > Acetaminophen
- > Ibuprophen
- > Bleach
- > Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- > Paper towels
- > Tissues
- > Surgical masks  
(one for each person)
- > Sugar, baking soda, salt,  
salt substitute

**For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter, visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.**

Many of the recommendations in this brochure are from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care or current public health advice. Seek advice from your health-care provider, the CDC and your local health department. Visit [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov).

As with all medications and treatments, there are side effects and potential complications. Seek professional advice from your health-care professional to make sure any medication or vaccination is appropriate to your health.

## **Media Outreach/Sample Key Messages for Schools**

In the event of a pandemic, the media will be very much involved in reporting the state of schools and children. As such, it is important to be able to convey relevant, accurate, and meaningful information when asked by the media. The following details key points that may be of use to your school or district if questioned by the media during a pandemic. Please note: this is not an exhaustive list. Rather, it is a general outline of important points and issues.

Please contact your local public health department and/or local emergency management agencies for more information.

We know this is an anxious time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We are working closely with local health officials to deal with the situation and will keep parents updated with any important information.

At this time, under the guidance of the county health department, we believe students can safely attend classes and schools will remain open. Our thoughts are with all of our families and children who are affected.

If pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, health officials may need to close schools for an extended period of time.

The purpose of closing schools will be to decrease contact among children in order to decrease their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection. If schools are closed, children should stay at home.

We urge parents to plan now for the possibility of schools closing. Arrange day care, and home schooling.

Parents can help protect their children and prevent the spread of pandemic flu as they would colds and other flu by taking the following precautions:

- Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
- Teach your children to stay away from people who are sick and stay home from work or school if you are sick.

Recommendations may change during the course of a flu pandemic. We will make public announcements through the media and parents can access the school district's hotline at (INSERT HOTLINE).

For more information on pandemic flu and prevention, please contact your local public health department (INSERT CONTACT INFO)

Public health officials have ordered the closure of schools as a result of the pandemic flu outbreak in our community. Schools may be closed for an extended period of time.

We know this is a difficult time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We are working closely with health officials to deal with the situation and will keep parents updated with any important information.

Because pandemic flu is easily spread from person-to-person, it is unsafe for large groups of people to gather and children should stay home. The purpose of closing schools is to decrease contact among children in order to decrease their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection.

During this time, children and adults should stay away from other people and groups, as much as possible. Health officials also advise people should not gather in other locations such as homes, shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.

Parents can help protect their children and prevent the spread of pandemic flu as they would colds and other flu by taking the following precautions:

- Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet from people who are sick and stay home from work or school if you are sick.

Recommendations may change during the course of a flu pandemic. We will make public announcements through the media and parents can access the school district's hotline at (INSERT NUMBER)

For more information on pandemic flu and prevention, contact your local public health department (INSERT CONTACT INFO).

## **Section III – Surveillance**

## Surveillance and Reporting

During all stages of a pandemic flu outbreak, and before such an event in your community, it will be essential to monitor and document the number of students and staff who are absent and, in particular, whose symptoms meet the definition of influenza-like illness. Keeping track of these numbers will help officials determine when and whether to close schools and track the progress of the disease in the broader community.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines an influenza-like illness as having the following symptoms:

- Fever of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and one of the following:
  - ▶ Cough
  - ▶ Sore throat
  - ▶ Headache
  - ▶ Muscle ache

Included in this section:

- (1) **Daily Influenza Census.** This document details the specific information that your local public health department should receive from your school/district on a daily basis.
- (2) **Weekly Influenza Census:** This document details the specific information that your local public health department should receive from your school/district on a weekly basis.



## **Daily Influenza Census**

Once pandemic flu has been confirmed in Illinois, in your region, or neighboring states, schools may use this form to report daily to local public health departments.

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Elementary \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporting Individual: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Students**

Number students absent with flu-like illness today \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of students enrolled in your school \_\_\_\_\_

### **Staff/Faculty**

Number of staff/faculty absent with flu-like illness today \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of staff/faculty employed in your school \_\_\_\_\_

Assistance Needed/Comments:

**Weekly Influenza Census**

Once pandemic flu has been confirmed in Illinois, in your region, or neighboring states, individual schools may use this form to report weekly to local public health departments.

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Elementary \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporting Individual: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Students**

Number students absent with flu-like illness this week \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of students enrolled in your school \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff/Faculty**

Number of staff/faculty absent with flu-like illness this week \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of staff/faculty employed in your school \_\_\_\_\_

Assistance Needed/Comments:

## **Section IV – Fact Sheets**

# What Is an Influenza Pandemic?

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, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide.

## **Historically, the 20th century saw 3 pandemics of influenza:**

- 1918 influenza pandemic caused at least 675,000 U.S. deaths and up to 50 million deaths worldwide
- 1957 influenza pandemic caused at least 70,000 U.S. deaths and 1-2 million deaths worldwide
- 1968 influenza pandemic caused about 34,000 U.S. deaths and 700,000 deaths worldwide

## **Characteristics and challenges of a pandemic**

### **1. Rapid Worldwide Spread**

- When a pandemic influenza virus emerges, its global spread is considered inevitable.
- Preparedness activities should assume that the entire world population would be susceptible.
- Countries might, through measures such as border closures and travel restrictions, delay arrival of the virus, but cannot stop it.

### **2. Health Care Systems Overloaded**

- Most people have little or no immunity to a pandemic virus. Infection and illness rates soar. A substantial percentage of the world's population will require some form of medical care.
- Nations unlikely to have the staff, facilities, equipment and hospital beds needed to cope with large numbers of people who suddenly fall ill.
- Death rates are high, largely determined by four factors: the number of people who become infected, the virulence of the virus, the underlying characteristics and vulnerability of affected populations and the effectiveness of preventive measures.
- Past pandemics have spread globally in two and sometimes three waves.

### **3. Medical Supplies Inadequate**

- The need for vaccine is likely to outstrip supply.
- The need for antiviral drugs is also likely to be inadequate early in a pandemic.
- A pandemic can create a shortage of hospital beds, ventilators and other supplies. Surge capacity at non-traditional sites such as schools may be created to cope with demand
- Difficult decisions will need to be made regarding who gets antiviral drugs and vaccines.

### **4. Economic and Social Disruption**

- Travel bans, closings of schools and businesses and cancellations of events could have major impact on communities and citizens.
- Care for sick family members and fear of exposure can result in significant worker absenteeism.

## **Communications and Information are Critical Components of Pandemic Response**

Education and outreach are critical to preparing for a pandemic. Understanding what a pandemic is, what needs to be done at all levels to prepare for pandemic influenza, and what could happen during a pandemic helps us make informed decisions both as individuals and as a nation. Should a pandemic occur the public must be able to depend on its government to provide scientifically sound public health information quickly, openly and dependably. Visit [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) for more information.

# Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

## **Avian Flu in Birds is Spreading in Asia and Other Countries**

- Avian influenza - commonly called "bird flu" - is an infection caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally in birds.
- Wild birds can carry the viruses, but usually do not get sick from them. However, some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, can become infected, often fatally.
- One strain of avian influenza, the H5N1 virus, is endemic in much of Asia and has recently spread into Europe. Avian H5N1 infections have recently killed poultry and other birds in a number of countries.
- Strains of avian H5N1 influenza may infect various types of animals, including wild birds, pigs, and tigers.
- Symptoms in birds and other animals vary, but virulent strains can cause death within a few days.

## **Avian H5N1 Flu in Humans is Currently Very Limited and Not a Pandemic**

- Human H5N1 influenza infection was first recognized in 1997 when this virus infected 18 people in Hong Kong, causing 6 deaths.
- The World Health Organization is tracking the number of human cases of the H5N1 virus. See <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/#map>, for a map showing the nations with confirmed human cases and the number of cases.
- Currently, close contact with infected poultry has been the primary source for human infection. Though rare, there have been isolated reports of human-to-human transmission of the virus.
- Genetic studies confirm that the influenza A virus H5N1 mutates rapidly. Should it adapt to allow easy human-to-human transmission, a pandemic could ensue — it has not done so to date.
- At this time, it is uncertain whether the currently circulating H5N1 virus will lead to a global disease outbreak in humans — a pandemic.
- The reported symptoms of avian influenza in humans have ranged from typical influenza-like symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches) to eye infections (conjunctivitis), acute respiratory distress, viral pneumonia and other severe, life-threatening complications.

## **Preventing and Treating Avian Flu in Humans**

- Vaccines to protect humans against H5N1 viruses currently are under development. In addition, research is underway on methods to make large quantities of vaccine more quickly.
- So far, research suggests that two antiviral medicines, oseltamavir (Tamiflu®) and zanamavir (Relenza®), may be useful treatments for H5N1 avian influenza. However, H5N1 viruses are generally resistant to two other available antiviral medications, amantadine and rimantadine, so they cannot be used to treat avian flu.

# How Does Seasonal Flu Differ From Pandemic Flu?

Seasonal Flu	Pandemic Flu
Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns; occurs annually, usually in winter, in temperate climates	Occurs rarely (three times in 20th century - last in 1968)
Usually some immunity built up from previous exposure	No previous exposure; little or no pre-existing immunity
Healthy adults usually not at risk for serious complications; the very young, the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions at increased risk for serious complications	Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications
Health systems can usually meet public and patient needs	Health systems may be overwhelmed
Vaccine developed based on known flu strains and available for annual flu season	Vaccine probably would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic
Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available	Effective antivirals may be in limited supply
Average U.S. deaths approximately 36,000/yr	Number of deaths could be quite high (e.g., U.S. 1918 death toll approximately 675,000)
Symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain. Deaths often caused by complications, such as pneumonia.	Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent
Generally causes modest impact on society (e.g., some school closing, encouragement of people who are sick to stay home)	May cause major impact on society (e.g. widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellation of large public gatherings)
Manageable impact on domestic and world economy	Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy

# **Section V – Posters and Promotional Materials**

# Stopping the **Flu** is up to You!

The flu is spread from person-to-person when someone who has the flu sneezes, coughs or even talks. The flu virus is put into the air and may be inhaled by anyone close by. Occasionally a person may become infected by touching something with the virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.



To protect yourself and your family from the flu:

**Wash** your hands often with soap and warm water.

**Use tissue** when you cough, sneeze or spit, and dispose of the tissue in a covered trash bin.

**Keep hands away** from your face.

**Clean** shared space more often such as phone receivers, keyboards, steering wheels and office equipment.

**Do not share personal items** such as forks, spoons, toothbrushes and towels.

**Avoid** crowds or people who are ill.





## HOW DOES SEASONAL FLU DIFFER FROM PANDEMIC FLU?

November 1, 2005

### SEASONAL FLU

Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns; occurs annually, usually in winter, in temperate climates

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Generally causes modest impact on society (e.g., some school closing, encouragement of people who are sick to stay home)

Manageable impact on domestic and world economy

### PANDEMIC FLU

Occurs rarely (three times in 20<sup>th</sup> century - last in 1968)

No previous exposure; little or no pre-existing immunity

Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications

Health systems may be overwhelmed

Vaccine probably would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic

Effective antivirals may be in limited supply

Number of deaths could be quite high (e.g., U.S. 1918 death toll approximately 500,000)

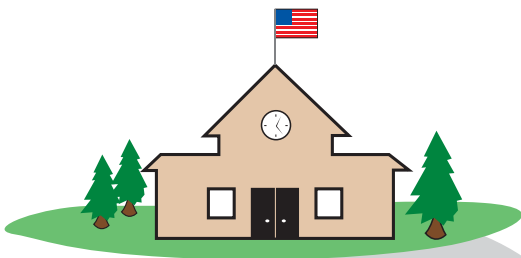
Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent

May cause major impact on society (e.g. widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellation of large public gatherings)

Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy

For additional information visit: [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

# Keep Our School Healthy



- **Teach kids not to cough on others**



- **Teach kids to wash hands often, with soap.**



- **Teach kids to cover their coughs.**

# Pandemic Influenza



## What You Need to Know

Available online at:

[http://cchealth.org/topics/pandemic\\_flu/school\\_action\\_kit/pandemic\\_flu\\_preso.ppt](http://cchealth.org/topics/pandemic_flu/school_action_kit/pandemic_flu_preso.ppt)

Contra Costa County, California Health Services

Public Health Division

June 2006

# Overview

- Seasonal influenza
- Pandemic influenza
- Can history help us see the future?
- Challenges
- Where do we go from here?

# Seasonal Influenza

- Respiratory illness characterized by fever, headache, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle aches and occasionally nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Complications occur mostly among “high risk” and include bacterial pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic conditions such as congestive heart disease, asthma and diabetes

# Epidemiology of Influenza

- Infectivity is relatively high
- The incubation period is short
- Clinical illness is non-specific
- Ease of transmission

## Routes of transmission

- Common: large droplets (sneezing, coughing, contact with saliva)
- Common: fomites
- Rare: airborne over long distance

# Average Impact of Annual Influenza in US

- 5-20% infected
- Over 200,000 hospitalized
  - About half in 65+
- 36,000 deaths
  - >90% in 65+

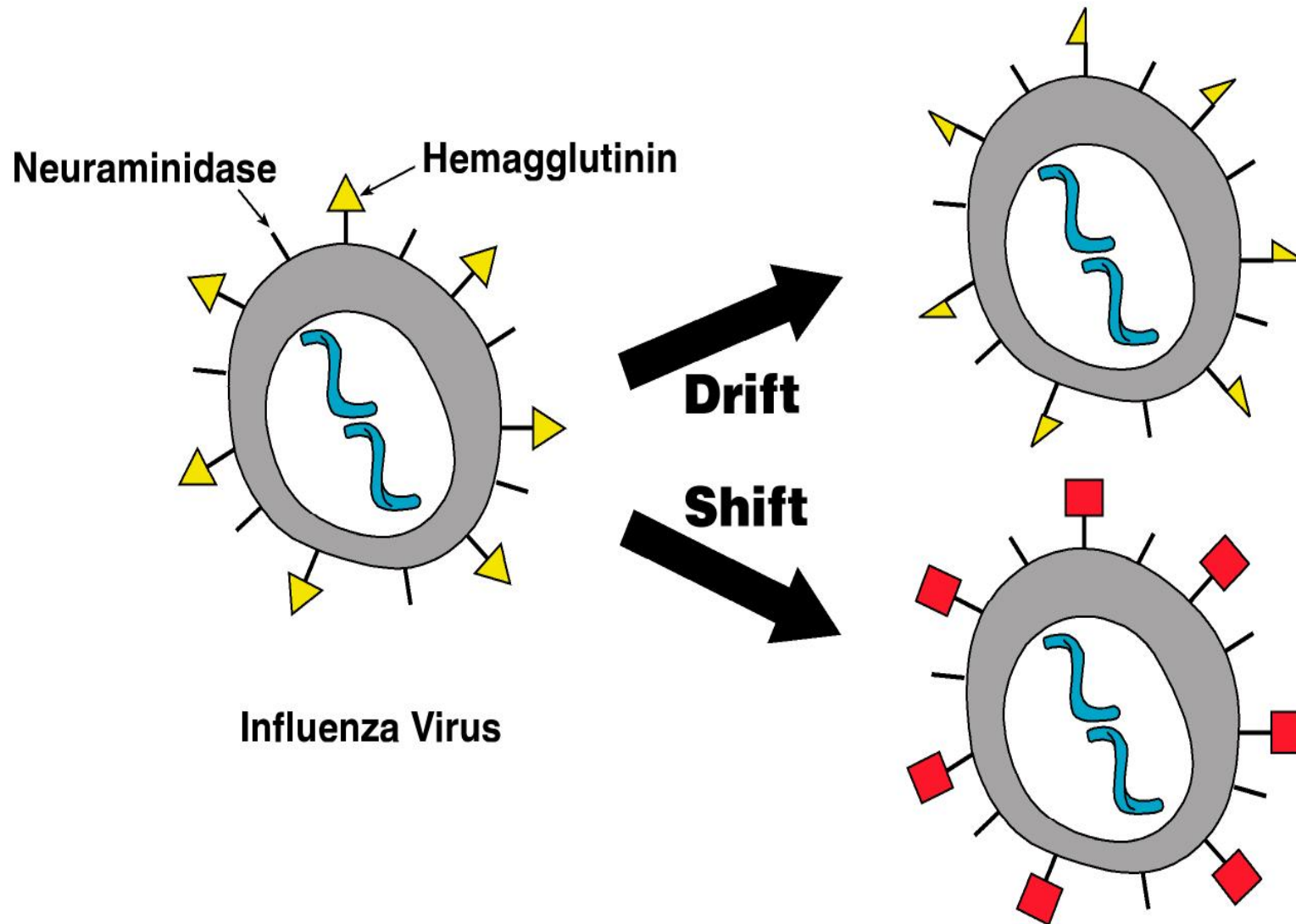






# Influenza: Antigenic Drift and Shift

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# Pandemic Influenza Summary

- Easily transmitted from person to person
- Highly infectious virus
- Most of population has no experience (immunity)
- May also infect animals other than humans
- Limited or no vaccine
- Limited antiviral medications available
- Limited excess capacity in health care system

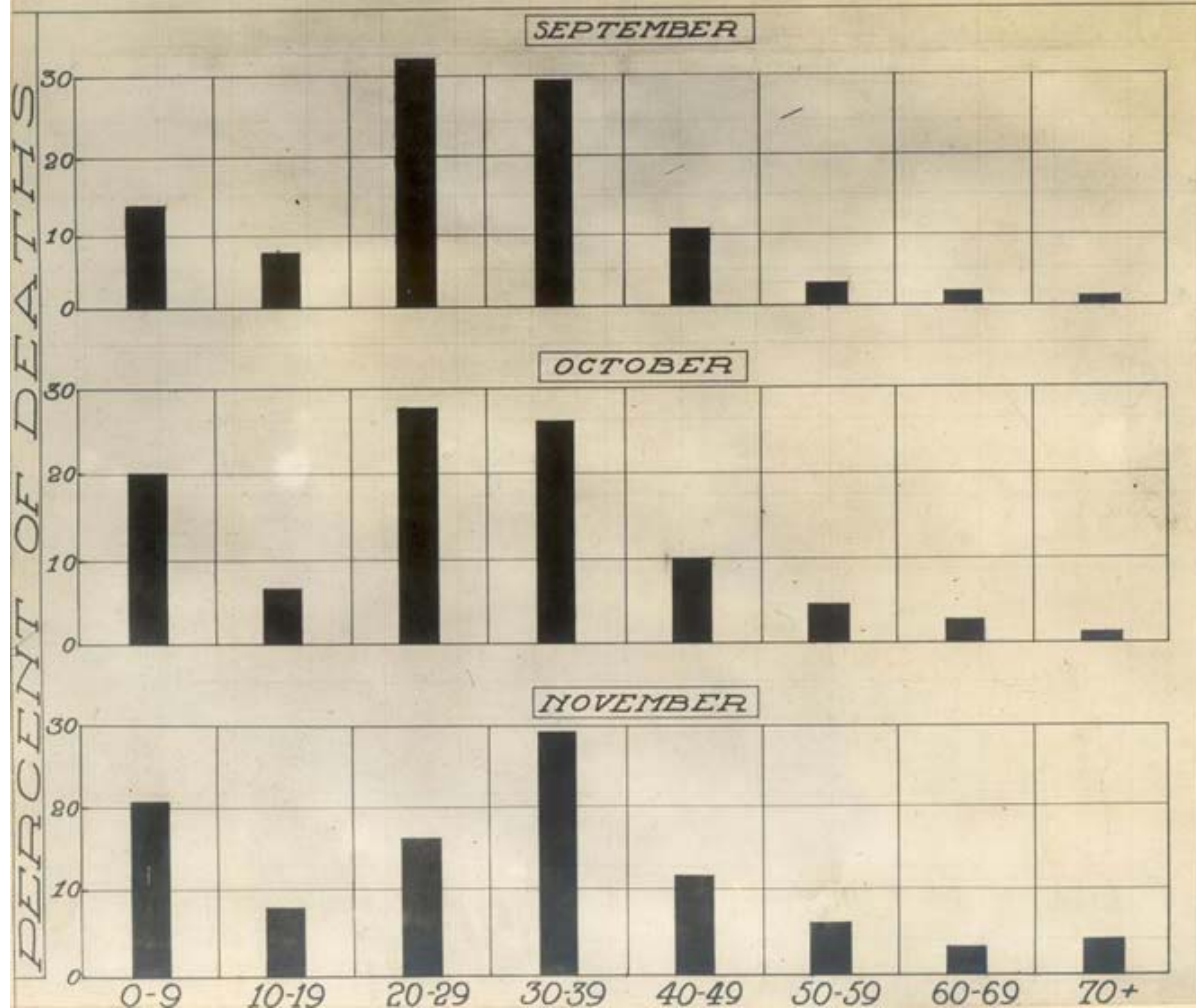
# Influenza Pandemics in the 20th Century

Years	Flu	Virus	Mortality
1918-1919	“Spanish”	Type A (H1N1)	20 million worldwide 550,000 US
1957-1958	“Asian”	Type A (H2N2)	70,000 US
1968-1969	“Hong Kong”	Type A (H3N2)	34,000 US

Glezen WP. *Epidemiol Rev*. 1996;18:85.  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<http://www.cdc.gov>



# AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENZA AND PNEUMONIA DEATHS AT BOSTON DURING SEPT.-OCT.-NOV. 1918.



# Inactivated Influenza Virus Vaccine

Content

Updated yearly to protect against anticipated strains, consists of type A (2) and type B (1)

Process

Grown in chicken eggs and formalin inactivated



# Antiviral - Tamiflu

- Limited supply – single manufacturer for world supply
- Expensive
- Would need to prioritize who would receive anti-viral medications

# Influenza vs SARS

	Influenza	SARS
Incubation period	2-3 days	10 days
Infectivity	Up to 24 hours before symptoms peak	Increases over course of illness
Symptoms	Non-specific symptoms, no well defined risk groups	Fever, cough H/O exposure to SARS pt (or setting)



# Pandemic Flu - Summary

- We do not have a virus circulating that could cause a pandemic at this time
- The world experiences a pandemic of influenza periodically and not at regular or predictable intervals
- We need to have plans in place to respond in the event of a pandemic to take care of the needs of the people we serve

## **Section VI – Information and Resources on the Web**

## Information and Resources on the Web

**Illinois Department of Public Health**

[www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us)

**Illinois State Board of Education**

[www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net)

**United States Department of Education (search pandemic flu)**

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

**National Association of School Nurses (search pandemic flu)**

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

**United States Department of Health and Human Services Pandemic Flu Information**

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

**National Education Association (search pandemic flu)**

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

**American Federation of Teachers (search pandemic flu)**

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

**Regional Office of Education Information**

[www.isbe.net/regionaloffices](http://www.isbe.net/regionaloffices)