



Pandemic Influenza and Infectious Disease

WHAT IT IS

A pandemic is a global communicable disease outbreak (whereas an “epidemic” is regional in nature or otherwise confined to particular populations). An influenza pandemic occurs when a strain of influenza virus emerges:

- Which causes serious illness.
- For which there is limited immunity in the human population.
- Which is able to easily and quickly spread person-to-person – especially through saliva, coughing, or sneezing.

Infectious diseases are one of the leading causes of death worldwide. Because of air travel and international trade, infectious disease agents are carried across borders every day by humans, animals, insects, and food products.

WHAT TO DO

Before (Preparedness/Mitigation)

- Sign up for [SpotsyAlert](#) and have a battery or crank powered weather radio available.
- Get a yearly flu vaccine for everyone six months and older, unless a doctor advises against it.
- Wash or sanitize your hands often.
- Take common-sense steps to stop the spread of germs including covering coughs and sneezes and staying away from others as much as possible when you are sick.
- Wash and sanitize household items often.
- Practice good health habits, including eating a balanced diet, exercising daily, and getting sufficient rest.
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Get copies and maintain electronic versions of health records from doctors, hospitals, pharmacies and other sources and store them, for personal reference.
- Refer to “Medical Emergency,” below.



During (Response)

- Listen to official information.
- If you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash or sanitize hands often.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- If you have a fever, make sure you are fever-free for 24 hours before you return to work and school.

After (Recovery)

- Clean surfaces such as counters, doorknobs, fixtures, phones, remotes, and linens.
- Common household cleaning products can kill the flu virus, including products containing:
 - Chlorine
 - Hydrogen peroxide
 - Detergents (soap)
 - Iodine-based antiseptics
 - Alcohols

KEY TERMS

Influenza (flu) is a respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus that affects millions of people each year. Different strains have widely variant characteristics in terms of virulence, communicability, and population impacts. Flu virus also has the capacity to rapidly mutate and cross to and from multiple species.

Nonpharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) are actions, apart from getting vaccinated and taking medicine, which people and communities can take to help slow the spread of respiratory illnesses, like pandemic flu. Many NPIs are provided below, in the list of "What to do: Before."



Medical Emergency

WHAT IT IS

A medical emergency is any acute injury or illness that poses an immediate risk to a person's life or long-term health. You can't predict accidents or illnesses, but you can prepare for a medical emergency. Medical emergencies may happen on their own, or they may be a secondary impact of virtually every other hazard. Some examples of medical emergencies are: difficulty breathing, fainting, chest pain or pressure, uncontrolled bleeding, coughing or vomiting blood, sudden severe pain, poisoning, or major injuries, such as broken bones, lacerations, burns, or puncture wounds.

WHAT TO DO

Before (Preparedness/ Mitigation)

- Know how to call or text 911.
- Keep well-stocked First Aid kits at home, at work and in your car.
- Put together a list of emergency contacts.
- Keep a list of medical conditions and medications with you at all times.
- Fill out a File of Life and put it on your refrigerator door.
- Learn the warning signs of medical emergencies.
- Participate in trainings such as CPR, First Aid, Basic Life Support (BLS), or Stop the Bleed to prepare yourself for emergencies.

During (Response)

- Stay calm, and call 911. If you are trained, start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) or rescue breathing, if necessary.
- If you think you are having a medical emergency, seek immediate medical care.
- Gather as much information as possible about the circumstance, and call 911. Follow all the operator's instructions carefully. Stay on the line until the operator says it's OK to hang up.
- If you have only a brief time with the operator, make sure you share your address and your medical issue first.
- Call if you can, text if you can't. It is always preferred that you call 911 since it is a better way of exchanging information.



After (Recovery)

- Review all your documentation to ensure your emergency contact and medical information are up to date.
- Educate others in your networks to better prepare your community.

KEY TERMS

CPR is short for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. CPR is an emergency procedure in which the heart and lungs are made to work by compressing the chest overlying the heart and forcing air into the lungs. It is used to maintain circulation when the heart has stopped pumping on its own. CPR courses are offered by many community organizations.

First Aid refers to a course of basic injury-treatment and life-saving skills offered by many community organizations.

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a portable device that checks the heart rhythm and can send an electric shock to the heart to try to restore a normal rhythm.

File of Life is a form that you keep on your refrigerator door that provides emergency personnel critical medical and emergency contact information in case you are unable to provide that information to them yourself.