

PANDEMIC FLU

Fact Sheet

Preparing for a Pandemic – What You Can Do

Importance and Benefits of Being Prepared

A pandemic would touch every aspect of society, so every part of society must begin to prepare. The effects of a pandemic can be lessened if you prepare ahead of time.

As you begin your individual or family planning, you may want to review New York state's planning efforts and those of your local public health and emergency preparedness officials. State plans and other planning information can be found at www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/checklists.html.

Stockpiling Supplies

Food and Water

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 is also useful in other types of emergencies like power outages and disasters.

Start now so that you have a week or two supply of water and food. Get a few items every time you go to the grocery store and buy food that is:

- ✓ nonperishable (will keep for a long time) and doesn't require refrigeration
- ✓ easy to prepare in case you are unable to cook
- ✓ requires little or no water, so you can conserve water for drinking

Equipment and supplies

Have any prescription and nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand such as:

- ✓ pain relievers
- ✓ stomach remedies
- ✓ cough and cold medicines
- ✓ fluids with electrolytes
- ✓ vitamins
- ✓ alcohol-based hand sanitizers

Knowledge

Prevention means limiting the spread of germs and preventing infection:

- ✓ Improve hygiene by washing hands frequently with soap and water, and model the correct behavior for children

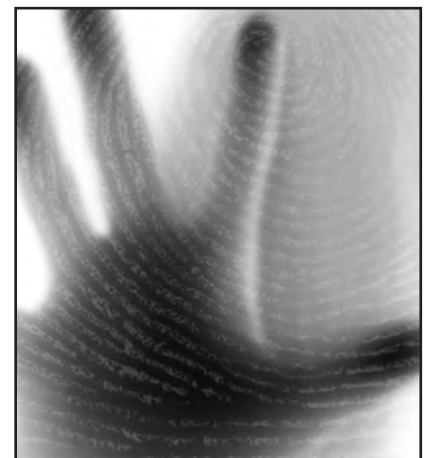
Viruses can survive on your hands for hours, and washing your hands regularly is a proven way to decrease your chances of getting sick—even if a deadly pandemic flu hits. Our nation's top health officials say: use warm water, wash with soap for at least 20 seconds (imagine singing the "Happy Birthday" song twice), and if possible use your paper towel to turn off the faucet. If you are not near soap and water, an alcohol-based gel will do.

- ✓ Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, or cough into the crook of your arm and be sure to model that behavior.
- ✓ Stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick. Stay home from work and school if you are sick.
- ✓ Get seasonal flu vaccination.
- ✓ Stay informed.

With all the talk of a possible flu pandemic, it is good to know that the simplest of acts can help keep you safe.

Many of us are guilty of skipping out at the sink. According to a 2005 survey sponsored by the American Society for Microbiology, 91 percent of adults say they always wash their hands after using a public bathroom, but in reality, only 83 percent were observed doing so. Only 32 percent of those surveyed say they always wash their hands after coughing or sneezing.

"Viruses can survive on your hands for hours, and washing your hands regularly is a proven way to decrease your chances of getting sick."



Preparing for a Pandemic – What You Can Do Continued...

To illustrate just how important a small thing like washing your hands can be, in 2005, health workers in a poor community in Karachi, Pakistan, educated residents about washing their hands and gave out free soap. The results were quite impressive. Soap and hand washing education decreased impetigo, a contagious skin infection, by 34 percent, diarrhea by 53 percent and pneumonia by 50 percent. A researcher who studied the Pakistan experiment put it best, noting that “the time has come to shout from the rooftops that hand hygiene promotion should be a worldwide priority.”

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other federal agencies are providing funding, advice and other support to your state. The federal government will provide up-to-date information and guidance to the public if an influenza pandemic unfolds. For reliable, accurate and timely information, visit the federal government’s official Web site at www.pandemicflu.gov.

For more information, including general information on pandemic flu and avian flu, NYSUT and AFT have developed fact sheets. Call your NYSUT regional office for copies or visit the NYSUT Web site at www.nysut.org/healthandsafety/index



Using friction—rubbing your hands together while washing them—is essential to remove bacteria and germs.

More information for K-12 and higher ed pandemic planning can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/pandemic/index.html>.

Check out what the federal government is providing educational employers to assist them in dis-

seminating health information, planning for staff and student absences and maintaining a learning environment.

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LEAD & MANAGE MY SCHOOL
Emergency Planning: Pandemic

Scientists predict that the world is due for an influenza pandemic—a global outbreak from a new strain of influenza. The U.S. Department of Education is collaborating with the health experts and agencies across the federal government to ensure that, in the case of pandemic flu, our operations and the services we provide will continue. State and local preparedness will be crucial in preventing the spread of disease. Because schools are centers of community life, we ask that educators and administrators work with local officials to make planning for pandemic flu a priority. The tools below are designed to assist you in disseminating health information, planning for staff and student absences, and maintaining a learning environment.

“When it comes to preparing our school community... there are three key steps to take: One, talk to your local health officials and work together to develop a plan. Then secondly, train your teachers and administrators to implement the plan. And finally, teach students and parents so they understand what to do in the event of a pandemic.”
— Secretary Margaret Spellings, March 2006

Important Checklists

It is important to think about health issues that could arise if an influenza pandemic occurs and how they could affect you and your loved ones. For example, if a mass vaccination clinic is set up in your community, you may need to provide as much information as you can about your medical history when you go, especially if you have a serious health condition or allergy.

Here is a chart to help you keep important family health information on hand.

NAME: _____
BLOOD TYPE : _____ ALLERGIES : _____
PAST/ CURRENT MEDICAL CONDITIONS: _____

CURRENT MEDICATIONS/ DOSAGES: _____

NAME: _____
BLOOD TYPE : _____ ALLERGIES : _____
PAST/ CURRENT MEDICAL CONDITIONS: _____

CURRENT MEDICATIONS/ DOSAGES: _____

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BLOOD TYPE : _____ ALLERGIES : _____
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Important Checklists

Pandemic Flu Kit

The Centers for Disease Control has a suggested list of items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:

Examples of food and non-perishables

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans and soups
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter or nuts
- Dried fruit
- Crackers
- Canned juices
- Bottled water
- Canned or jarred baby food and formula
- Pet food
- Other non-perishable items

Examples of medical, health & emergency supplies

- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment
- Soap and water, or alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash
- Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Thermometer
- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Vitamins
- Fluids with electrolytes
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Portable radio
- Manual can opener
- Garbage bags
- Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers



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