

Differences Between Seasonal Flu and Pandemic Flu



Seasonal Flu

- Caused by influenza viruses occurring every year, which are similar to those already circulating among people.
- Symptoms include:
 - fever
 - headache
 - tiredness
 - dry cough
 - sore throat
 - runny nose
 - muscle pain
- Deaths can be caused by complications to seasonal flu, such as pneumonia. Healthy adults are not usually at risk for serious complications.
- The very young, the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk for serious complications.
- Generally causes a modest impact on society (e.g., some school closings, encouragement of people who are sick to stay home).

FYI - Every year in the United States, on average:

- 5-20% of the population gets the flu
- More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications
- About 36,000 people die from the flu



Pandemic Flu

- Caused by a *new* influenza virus that people have not been exposed to in the past.
- Likely to be more severe, affect more people and cause more illness and deaths than seasonal flu because people will not have immunity to the new virus.
- Symptoms may be similar to seasonal flu but may be more severe and complications more serious.
- Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications.

The effects of a severe pandemic could be more damaging than those of seasonal flu. It could lead to high levels of illness, death, social disruption and economic loss. Everyday life could be disrupted because so many people in so many places become seriously ill at the same time. Impacts could range from school and business closings to the interruption of basic services such as public transportation and food delivery.



Take these common steps to stop the spread of germs:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or 60% or better alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid or minimize contact with sick people (a minimum three feet distancing is recommended).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues when you cough and sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow.
- Stay away from others as much as possible when you are sick.
- Adopt business/school practices that encourage employees/students to stay home when sick.

When someone is sick:

- Designate one person as the caregiver.
- Keep everyone's personal items separate.
- Disinfect surfaces that are commonly touched around the home or workplace.
- Wash dishes in the dishwasher or by hand using very hot water and soap.
- Wash clothes with detergent and very hot water, and wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.
- Wear disposable gloves when in contact with body fluids.

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 7/2006 www.pandemicflu.gov.



**American
Red Cross**

of Northeastern New York

For more information on disaster and emergency preparedness, visit www.redcrossny.org or call **(518) 458-8111**.

Influenza Preparedness

Be Informed

Know the Difference

Seasonal Flu—A contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza (flu) viruses occurring every year. It affects an average of 5 percent to 20 percent of the U.S. population by causing mild to severe illness, and in some instances can lead to death.

Epidemic—The rapid spread of a disease that affects some or many people in a community or region at the same time.

Pandemic—An outbreak of a disease that affects large numbers of people throughout the world and spreads rapidly.

Swine Flu—Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that cause regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person.

Avian Influenza—Commonly known as bird flu, this strain of influenza virus is naturally occurring in birds. Wild birds can carry the virus and may not get sick from it; however, domestic birds may become infected by the virus and often die from it.

Terminology Defined

Immunity to a disease is defined by the presence of antibodies to that disease in a person's system. Most people have some resistance to infections, either after they recover from an illness or through vaccination.

Quarantine is the physical separation of healthy people who have been exposed to an infectious disease from those who have not been exposed.

Isolation is a state of separation between persons or groups to prevent the spread of disease.

Social distancing is a practice imposed to limit face-to-face interaction in order to prevent exposure and transmission of a disease.

Local Government Resources

New York State 24-hour toll-free hotline for pandemic illness questions: 1 (800) 808-1987

New York State Department of Health

Capital District Field Office
One Fulton Street
Troy, New York 12180-3298
Phone: (518) 408-5318
Fax: (518) 408-5392
www.health.state.ny.us

Albany County Department of Health

175 Green Street
Albany, NY 12202
Phone: (518) 447-4580
Fax: (518) 447-4698

Columbia County Department of Health

325 Columbia Street
Hudson, NY 12534
Phone: (518) 828-3358 | Fax: (518) 828-5894

Fulton County Department of Public Health

2714 State Highway 29
(County Services Complex)
P.O. Box 415
Johnstown, NY 12095
Phone: (518) 408-5318

Greene County Public Health

411 Main Street
3rd Floor, Suite 300
PO Box 771
Catskill, NY 12414
Phone: (518) 719-3600 | Fax: (518) 719-3782

Montgomery County Public Health

20 Park Street
Fonda, NY 12068
Phone: (518) 853-3531

Rensselaer County Public Health Department

2nd Floor, Ned Pattison Government Center
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: (518) 270-2655

Schenectady County Public Health Department

107 Nott Terrace
Schaffer Heights
Schenectady, NY 12308
Phone: (518) 386-2810

Schoharie County Public Health Department

County Office Building, 1st Floor
276 Main Street
Schoharie, NY 12157
Send mail to: P.O. Box 667 Schoharie, NY 12157-0667
Phone: (518) 295-8365 | Fax: (518) 295-8327