

What government is doing to prepare for a pandemic

The government's response to pandemic influenza takes in more than public health. It represents a broadly based, multi-agency approach to a problem with broad implications for society.

In November 2005, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a comprehensive plan for responding to a possible pandemic. In that same month, Governor Tim Pawlenty launched a coordinated effort to get Minnesota ready for a possible pandemic, and in April 2006 the state released draft versions of its own pandemic flu plans. In May 2006, the White House released a new implementation plan for the federal pandemic flu response strategy.

Our state's pandemic planning involves a number of state and local government agencies, working in partnership with each other and with the private sector, to do a number of different jobs:

- The **Department of Public Safety** will be responsible for organizing and coordinating our overall response to a pandemic.
- The **Department of Agriculture** and the **Board of Animal Health** will be responsible for protecting our poultry flocks from the threat of "bird flu."
- The **Department of Natural Resources** will play an important role in detecting the presence of the bird flu virus in wild birds and waterfowl – the most likely way that bird flu will make its way to Minnesota.
- The **Minnesota Department of Health** – along with local health agencies and health care providers, all across the state – will work to minimize the impact of a pandemic on human health.

For more information:

Visit the state avian/pandemic flu information website at:

www.birdflu.state.mn.us

....or go to the Minnesota Department of Health website at:

www.health.state.mn.us

...and click on "Pandemic Influenza" or "Avian H5N1 Influenza."



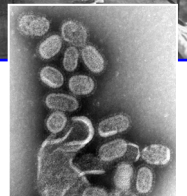
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Hoping for the best —

...ready for the worst



Preparing Minnesota for an influenza pandemic



**Minnesota Department of Health
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What is pandemic flu?

An influenza pandemic is a very large outbreak of flu, usually affecting the entire world. A pandemic can happen whenever there is a major change in the virus that causes flu.

Flu viruses change over time. That's why you need to get a flu shot every fall – to protect against the flu strains that will be around during the coming flu season.

Usually these changes are gradual – this year's flu viruses won't be that different from last year's viruses.



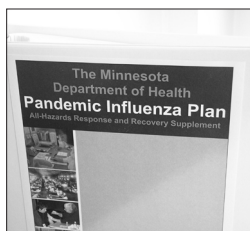
But when a major change occurs, most people will have little or no immunity to the new virus. Unlike regular flu, a pandemic virus can show up any time of year, and we probably won't have a vaccine for it

– at least not right away. Antiviral drugs may or may not work, and they may be in short supply. The resulting wave of illness can spread rapidly across the globe, making many millions of people ill.

We have had three pandemics in the last century – in 1918, 1957 and 1968. The 1918 pandemic was the worst. It killed tens of millions of people worldwide, and

caused widespread social disruption. The 1957 and 1968 pandemics were much less severe.

We don't know when the next pandemic will happen, or how bad it will be. But sooner or later, it *will* happen – and we need to be ready.



Protecting yourself, your family & your community

Getting ready for a pandemic starts *now* – and there's a lot you can do.

Stay healthy. Keep yourself in shape. Eat nutritious foods, don't smoke, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. And get a flu shot every fall, so you're protected against ordinary "seasonal" flu.

Learn how to avoid spreading disease.

Practice "respiratory etiquette." Start developing habits that will help you avoid getting – or spreading – infectious diseases. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue – or the upper part of your sleeve – when you cough or sneeze.



Dispose of the tissue afterward. Wash your hands thoroughly – and frequently. If you don't have access to soap and water, use an alcohol-based, waterless hand cleaner.



Develop a family emergency plan.

Know how you'll get in touch with each other – and where you'll gather as a family – in an emergency. Know where you'll go, and what you'll do. Keep a list of emergency phone numbers in a handy place. Know what routes you will use if you have to evacuate. Store emergency numbers in your cell phones under "ICE" ("In Case of Emergency"), so someone else can call your emergency numbers if you're not able to. Use more than one entry ("ICE-1," "ICE-2," etc.) if you have more than one emergency number.

Create an emergency kit. Make sure your kit has everything you'll need to get by if you have to remain at home for a period of time – up to two weeks, if possible. Be sure to include:

- A supply of drinking water (one gallon per person per day) and non-perishable food.
- Basic equipment like a flashlight, battery-operated radio, and a supply of batteries. Be sure to include a manual can opener.
- Personal care products – soap, toiletries, waterless hand cleaner, extra glasses or contact lenses, prescription and over-the-counter drugs, tissues and toilet paper, and any special items for infants or people with special health needs.
- A good first aid kit.
- Kitchen utensils and dishwashing supplies.
- Extra clothing and bedding.
- Critical miscellaneous items – notebook & pen, whistle, money & credit cards, extra car keys, medical and insurance information, and copies of other important documents.
- Games, reading material, and other entertainment items – for children and adults. You might need to stay home for a while during a pandemic.

Are we ready for a pandemic?

You're never really "done" preparing for an event like a pandemic. You can always do more. But a lot of work has already been done, and we're still making progress. We're better prepared today than we were yesterday – and we'll be better prepared tomorrow than we are today.

For more information:

Go to the Minnesota avian/pandemic website at www.birdflu.state.mn.us – or the federal pandemic website at www.pandemicflu.gov.