

**YOUR GUIDE TO**

# Preparing for Pandemic Flu

**SOUTHERN MAINE**



Regional Resource Center for  
Public Health Emergency Preparedness

**Your safety.  
That's why public health is  
working.**

**Because of the potential for pandemic influenza, the Southern Maine Regional Resource Center for Public Health Emergency Preparedness wants you to know more about this possible health threat. This guide includes basic information about pandemic influenza, individual and family preparedness, as well as where you can get more information.**

**This guide was developed in cooperation with MaineHealth, Maine Medical Center, the Cumberland County Emergency Management Agency, and the Lincoln County Emergency Management Agency.**

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**To learn more about us, visit  
[www.smrrc.org](http://www.smrrc.org)**

# What You Should Know

**P**andemic influenza (flu) is a worldwide outbreak of a new flu virus for which there is little or no immunity (protection) in the human population. Scientists and health professionals are concerned that the current virus in birds (avian flu) may develop into the next human pandemic. Pandemic flu can spread easily from person-to-person and cause serious illness and death. When new pandemic flu spreads it creates a public health emergency. A pandemic will last longer, make more people seriously ill and may cause more deaths than any other health crisis in our time.

A long-lasting and widespread outbreak of the disease could mean changes in many areas of our lives. Schools might need to temporarily close. Public transportation could be limited and air flights may be cancelled. Because so many people will be ill, many employees will not be able to go to work and many businesses and public services may have to close or limit hours.

It is very important to plan ahead. Federal, state and local governments are taking steps to better prepare for and respond to a pandemic. Individuals also need to take action to be better prepared.

## ABOUT AVIAN FLU

**Avian influenza (flu) is also known as bird flu. A non-human flu virus causes this infection in birds. Bird flu is very contagious among birds and can make some domesticated birds – like chickens and ducks – very sick and can kill them.**

**Bird flu viruses do not usually infect humans, but this latest outbreak of bird flu has infected people, mainly in Southeast Asian countries. When the illness infects people, it is very serious and over half the people sick with bird flu have died. It has not been found in birds or people in the United States (as of Spring 2007).**

**People get bird flu from contact with infected birds. Infected birds shed the virus in saliva and fecal droppings. People may also get the virus by eating undercooked poultry. You cannot get the virus by eating properly cooked poultry or eggs so be sure your poultry is fully cooked.**

**If you were exposed to bird flu, you could have symptoms for up to 14 days. Symptoms usually include the flu-like symptoms of fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, shortness of breath and even eye infections. Serious cases of bird flu cause life-threatening breathing problems including pneumonia. It can even cause death.**

**Healthcare providers will treat patients depending on their symptoms. Depending on how serious the symptoms, treatment may include supportive care, use of antiviral medicines, or even hospitalization.**

**Scientists and health professionals are concerned about bird flu because the current virus in birds may change and develop into a virus that will spread easily from one person to another, causing the next pandemic in humans. Because it may not be possible to stop a pandemic once it begins, the pandemic flu can cause serious illness and death.**

**To protect yourself against bird flu, health officials recommend you take the same steps you would to protect yourself against seasonal flu or cold. (See *What You Can Do*).**

# WHAT YOU CAN DO

Preparing for a pandemic flu can reduce your chances of getting sick and help limit the spread of disease

Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, exercising daily, getting enough rest and drinking fluids. You should also get your seasonal (annual) flu shot.

Stay informed by keeping up-to-date on a possible pandemic by listening to radio & television, reading news stories and using the internet.

These common-sense steps can help stop the spread of influenza germs:

- Wash hands frequently using soap and water.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Put used tissues in the trash and then wash your hands.
- If you get sick, stay home and away from others as much as possible.
- Don't send sick children to school.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

## YOUR PANDEMIC FLU EMERGENCY KIT

As many as 1 in 4 people could get sick during a pandemic, with many of them seriously ill. Services and supplies we account on everyday may not be available. Every individual and family could be on their own, without care, for quite a while. This makes being prepared even more important.

Because everyday life may be difficult during a pandemic flu and services could be disrupted, make sure you have these items in your emergency preparedness kit:

- If possible, at least 30 days worth of food for you and your family. This should be food that does not need refrigeration. Foods like canned meats and fish, beans, soups, fruits, and dry goods like flour, salt, and sugar, are good choices.
- Water stored in sealed, unbreakable containers. If water service is disrupted, plan on one gallon for each person for each day, for up to 30 days. Include additional water for pets.
- If possible, at least 30 days worth of prescription medicines. Be sure to include your doctor's name and telephone number with your prescription.
- If possible, at least 30 days worth of ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for each person in the house for fever reduction and pain. Also include a 30 day supply of cough medicine.
- Rehydration Solution, for example Pedialyte for kids, Gatorade for adults and teens. Please see the small box below for instructions to make a rehydration solution for adults to drink. For children, especially infants and toddlers, a store-bought solution is strongly recommended.
- Cell phone and charger.
- Supply of protective face masks and plastic gloves. These will help protect you, especially if you are taking care of family members who are sick with the disease.
- Disinfectants and chlorine bleach.

You can get more information to make a general emergency preparedness plan and kit from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Call 1-202-282-8000 or visit their web site at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

### Rehydration Solution for Adults & Teens

- 4 cups of clean water
- 2 Tablespoons of sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt

Mix all the ingredients until the sugar disappears. You can drink the solution at room temperature. Please note: Do not boil the solution because that will reduce the solution's efficacy.

# Seasonal Flu vs Pandemic Flu

There are some key differences between seasonal and pandemic flu

## SEASONAL FLU

- ◆ Usually follows a predictable pattern, typically every year in the winter. There is usually some protection built up in a person from having the flu before.
- ◆ Healthy adults are not usually at risk for any serious complications.
- ◆ The medical community can usually meet public and patient needs.
- ◆ Vaccines are developed before the flu season, based on known virus strains.
- ◆ Supplies of antiviral drugs are usually available.
- ◆ Average number of deaths in the U.S. is about 36,000 per year.
- ◆ Regular flu symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, and muscle pain.
- ◆ A small impact on the community with sick people staying home from work and school.
- ◆ Small impact on U.S. and world economy.

## PANDEMIC FLU

- ◆ Doesn't happen often – only three times in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The last time was 1968. Since a new pandemic flu hasn't been seen before, there is no or little immunity.
- ◆ Healthy people may be at risk for serious complications.
- ◆ The medical community will be overwhelmed.
- ◆ Vaccine developed early may not be effective. Once an effective vaccine is developed, it may not be available for several months.
- ◆ May not have any effective antiviral drugs or the supply may be limited.
- ◆ The number of deaths would be much higher. Worldwide it could be millions.
- ◆ Symptoms would be more serious and there would be more medical complications.
- ◆ Big impact on the community. There could be travel restrictions, school closings, limited business hours or closings, and cancellation of public gatherings.
- ◆ Could have a big impact on U.S. and world economy.

## LEARN MORE

**Keep up-to-date on a possible pandemic flu by listening to radio and television, and reading news stories about pandemic flu.**

- > Go to [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) for updates and the most current information from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on national and international pandemic flu.
- > Go to [www.maineinflu.gov](http://www.maineinflu.gov) for Maine specific influenza information including avian, seasonal and pandemic flu.
- > Go to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for general health related information.
- > Go to [www.smrrc.org](http://www.smrrc.org) for more information and fact sheets on pandemic flu, avian flu, and general emergency preparedness.
- > Go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for all the information you will need to make your own emergency preparedness plan and supply kit.

### **For Travel Information and Warnings**

- > Go to [www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm) for health related travel information.
- > Go to [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) for health related travel information and international disease outbreak information.

# DURING A PANDEMIC FLU

Here are some things you will need to know about during a pandemic flu. Please remember, information will change during the pandemic and it will be important to keep up-to-date and follow public health orders.

## PUBLIC HEALTH INSTRUCTIONS

Throughout a pandemic flu you may be asked or required to do things to help slow the spread of the disease in our community. If local public health officials or your healthcare provider ask you to take certain actions, follow those instructions.

**Here are some examples of what you may be asked or required to do.**

- Anytime you are sick, 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.
- Even though you may be healthy, you could be asked to 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.

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

**Social Distancing is Our #1 Strategy** and is a voluntary way for citizens to help decrease the spread of a disease such as pandemic influenza by limiting any unnecessary interaction they may have with others in the community. A common way to accomplish this is to cancel elective large-scale events which bring people in close contact with each other. Examples of these events could be school, elective classes, large sporting events, concerts or even public transportation. Limiting social interactions between people during a disease outbreak such as pandemic influenza will make a big difference in keeping people away from those who may be sick and it will help stop the spread of the disease.

**ISOLATION** is for people who are already ill. When someone is isolated, they are separated from people who are healthy.

**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.

# Prevent the Spread of Disease at Home

*If you or a household member becomes ill during a pandemic flu and are being cared for at home, follow these instructions to control the spread of disease in the home.*



## **Isolate the ill person *WITHIN* your home.**

- The person who is ill should not leave the house unless they are being taken to a medical appointment. The sick person will have to stay home for two weeks after their symptoms begin, even if they are feeling better. Do not have visitors while the person is sick.
- Designate a room(s) only for the ill person(s) so they are separated from other household members. The room(s) should have a door that can be closed.
- The ill person should wear a protective mask when anyone is in the same room or car. People in the room or car with the ill person should also wear a protective mask. Disposable gloves should be used when cleaning or disinfecting any room or area where the sick person has been.

## **Wash hands with soap or use alcohol-based hand rubs.**

- Everyone in the household should wash their hands with soap between contact with others, before preparing food, and before eating.
- Wash hands after touching tissues or surfaces soiled with saliva or nose drainage.

## **Keep the household environment clean.**

- On a daily basis, clean surfaces and commonly shared items like microwaves, refrigerator handles, phones, remote controls, doorknobs and handles, toilet seats and handles, faucets, light switches and toys. Use a labeled household disinfectant or chlorine bleach mixture (see below).
- Chlorine bleach (Clorox) can be used as a disinfectant by mixing  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of cool water.

## **Cover noses and mouths when sneezing or coughing.**

- Remind children and others to cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, or to sneeze or cough into their sleeves. Put used tissues in a wastebasket, and then wash hands with soap or use an alcohol-based rub.
- Even when a person is wearing a mask, they should cough or sneeze into their sleeve.

## **Watch all household members for symptoms of respiratory illness.**

- Contact your healthcare provider if a fever or other symptoms such as chills, cough, sore throat, headache, or muscle aches develop.

## **Make sure supplies are onhand.**

- Keep supplies of masks, gloves, soap, tissues, paper towels and cleaning supplies on hand.
- Make sure all sinks and restrooms are stocked with soap and paper towels.
- Make sure that tissues are available in all bedrooms and common areas like living, dining, family, and computer rooms.



# IMPORTANT PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY PHONE NUMBERS

The following are numbers for non-emergency calls and can provide disaster related assistance and preparedness information.

- Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- 24 Hour Disease Reporting Line ..... 1-800-821-5821
- Maine Emergency Management Agency ..... 1-800-452-8735
- 2-1-1 Maine health & human services resource line
- Dial 2-1-1 from any phone or ..... 1-877-463-6207
- Maine Department of Transportation traffic information line
- Dial 5-1-1 from any phone or ..... 1-866-282-7578
- Northern New England Poison Center ..... 1-800-222-1222
- Maine Statewide Crisis Hotline ..... 1-888-568-1112
- Southern Maine Regional Resource Center ..... (207) 662-5142

Please contact your County Government about your Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

## Your Own Important Numbers



A family communications plan is very important. Write down these numbers and keep them close. These numbers should include friends and family home and cellular numbers, your doctor or clinic phone numbers, and your children's school contact information.

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## GETTING INFORMATION

Local television and radio stations, as well as a number of web sites, will provide information during a pandemic flu. In some instances, specific emergency instructions will be broadcast by:

### TELEVISION

- WCSH Channel 6
- WMTW Channel 8
- MPBN Channel 10
- WGME Channel 13
- WPFO Channel 23

### RADIO


- WBLM-FM 102.9
- WCLZ-FM 98.9
- WHOM-FM 94.9
- WJBQ-FM 97.9
- WLOB-FM 96.3
- WMGX-FM 93.1
- WPOR-FM 101.9
- WYNX-FM 100.9
- WBQW-FM 106.3
- WJAB-AM 1400
- WLOB-AM 1310
- WGAN-AM 560

During a pandemic flu, emergency instructions may include ways to protect your health, closings of schools and businesses, as well as cancelled events.

# Where to Find Emergency Medical Care

During a pandemic flu, it will be important NOT to go to the hospital except in the case of a medical emergency. Hospitals will be overwhelmed with patients during a pandemic and many sick people may have to be cared for at home or at a non-hospital location.

## **HOSPITALS** ( denotes trauma center)

**Maine Medical Center**   
22 Bramhall Street  
Portland, ME 04102  
(207) 662-0111  
[www.mmc.org](http://www.mmc.org)

**Mercy Hospital**  
144 State Street  
Portland, ME 04101  
(207) 879-3000  
[www.mercyhospital.com](http://www.mercyhospital.com)

**Mid Coast Hospital**  
123 Medical Ctr. Drive  
Brunswick, ME 04011  
(207) 729-0181  
[www.midcoasthealth.com](http://www.midcoasthealth.com)

**Parkview Adventist  
Medical Center**  
329 Maine Street  
Brunswick, ME 04011  
(207) 373-2000  
[www.parkviewamc.org](http://www.parkviewamc.org)

**Miles Memorial Hospital**  
35 Miles Street  
Damariscotta, ME 04543  
(207) 563-1234  
[www.mileshealthcare.org](http://www.mileshealthcare.org)

**St. Andrews Hospital**  
6 St. Andrews Lane  
Boothbay Harbor, ME 04538  
(207) 633-2121  
[www.standrewshealthcare.org](http://www.standrewshealthcare.org)

**Goodall Hospital**  
25 June Street  
Sanford, ME 04073  
(207) 324-4310  
[www.goodallhospital.org](http://www.goodallhospital.org)

**Southern Maine  
Medical Center**  
1 Medical Center Drive  
Biddeford, ME 04005  
(207) 283-7000  
[www.smmc.org](http://www.smmc.org)

**York Hospital**  
15 Hospital Drive  
York, ME 03909  
(207) 363-4321  
[www.yorkhospital.com](http://www.yorkhospital.com)

**Stephens Memorial Hospital**  
181 Main Street  
Norway, Maine 04268  
(207) 743-5933  
[www.mainehealth.org](http://www.mainehealth.org)

Call 911 in the event of a serious, life-threatening emergency. But remember, because a pandemic flu could be bigger than any other health emergency, 911 may be overwhelmed by the number of calls.