

YOUR GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR PANDEMIC FLU

Because of the potential for a pandemic flu, the Millburn Health Department wants you to know more about this possible health threat. This guide includes basic information about pandemic flu, individual and family preparedness, as well as where you can get more information.

What You Should Know

Pandemic 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 a new pandemic flu spreads it creates a public health emergency. This emergency will not be like anything we've faced before. A pandemic will last longer and make people seriously ill.

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 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 flu, also known as bird flu, is caused by a virus that occurs naturally in wild birds. Wild birds usually don't get sick from the virus, but they can pass it on to

domesticated birds like chickens, turkeys and ducks, which can get very sick. Bird flu viruses and human flu viruses are similar, but they are not exactly the same. Bird flu viruses mainly infect birds. They do not usually infect humans. But over time, bird flu viruses could change and spread among humans. Public health officials are concerned that the bird flu could one day be able to infect humans and spread from person to person. The first case of human infection was reported in 1997. Since then, more than 100 human cases have been reported in Asia. Half of the infected people died. Bird flu is spread when infected birds shed virus in their saliva, nasal secretions and droppings. Public health officials believe people were infected with bird flu after they had direct contact with these bodily fluids, or surfaces contaminated with these fluids. There is no danger from eating poultry or eggs, as long as they are fully cooked. To date there have been no human cases of bird flu in the US.

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. Be sure to get your seasonal flu shot.

Stay informed by keeping up-to-date on a possible pandemic by listening to reputable television and radio programs.

These steps can help stop the spread of flu 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.

LEARN MORE

👉 Go to www.cdc.gov for general information about pandemic flu and other health related information

👉 Go to www.redcross.org for all the information you will need to make your own emergency preparation plan.

- 👉 Go to www.pandemicflu.gov for updates on national and international pandemic flu.
- 👉 Go to www.njflupandemic.gov for updates on New Jersey flu information.
- 👉 Go to www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm for health related travel information.
- 👉 Go to www.who.int for health related information and international disease outbreak information.
- 👉 Go to your Town Website for specific information during a pandemic.

Your Pandemic Flu Emergency Kit

As many as 1 in 4 people could get sick during a pandemic. Services and supplies we count on everyday may not be available. Every individual and family could be on their own for a while. This makes being prepared even more important.

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

You can get more information on putting together a complete Emergency Preparedness Plan and Kit from the American Red Cross. Call 973-797-3300

- Two weeks worth of food for you and your family. This should be food that does not need refrigeration. Food like canned meats and fish, beans, soups, fruits, and dry goods.
- Water stored in sealed, unbreakable containers. If water service is disrupted, plan on one gallon per person per day for up to two weeks.
- Two weeks worth of prescription medications.
- Two weeks worth of ibuprofen or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for each person in the house for fever and pain. A two-week supply of cough medicine.
- Rehydration solution. For example, Pedialyte for kids, Gatorade for adults and teens. Please see box below for instructions to make a rehydration solution for adults and teens. For children, especially infants and toddlers, a store bought solution is strongly recommended.
- Cell phone and charger

Supply of plastic gloves. These will help protect you especially if you are taking care of family members who are sick.

Disinfectants and chlorine bleach.

Rehydration Solution for Adults and Teens:

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

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

Seasonal Flu vs Pandemic Flu

There are some key differences in how seasonal flu happens and how a pandemic flu happens.

SEASONAL FLU

- Usually follows a predictable pattern annually in the winter.
- Healthy adults are not usually at risk for serious complications.
- The medical community can meet public and patient needs.
- Vaccines are developed before the flu season, based on known virus strains.
- Supplies of antiviral drugs are usually available.
- There are about 36,000 annual deaths in the United States.
- Typical flu symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pains.
- 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

- Rarely happens –only three times in the 20th century. The last time was 1968. Since this is a new pandemic flu, people have little or no immunity.
- Healthy people may have serious complications.
- Medical community will be overwhelmed.
- An effective vaccine may not be available for several months.
- May not have effective antiviral drugs or may be limited.
- The number of deaths would be much higher. Worldwide could be millions.
- Symptoms would be more serious and there would be more medical complications.

- Big community impact: travel restrictions, school closings, limited business hours or closings, public gatherings cancelled.
- Big impact on US and world economies.

** Listen for emergency information on local radio, TV and cable stations, and use your battery-powered radio to monitor Emergency Alert System (EAS) information on the EAS radio stations in your area:*

Essex, Morris, Bergen, Hudson, Passaic:

WFME 94.7 FM

Middlesex:

WNJT 88.1 FM

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 hold back the spread of the disease in our community. If local public health officials or your healthcare provider ask you to take certain actions, please follow those instructions.

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

*When 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 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 virus. *There will be guidelines from the Federal and State health organizations depending upon the severity of the pandemic.*

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

ISOLATION is for people who are already sick. When someone is isolated, they are separated from people who are healthy. Having the sick person isolated (separated from

others) can help to slow or stop the spread of the disease. People who are isolated can be cared for in their homes, in hospitals, or in other healthcare facilities. Isolation is usually voluntary, but local, state and federal governments have the power to require the isolation of sick people to protect the public.

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. Even though the person is not sick at the moment, they were exposed to the disease and may still become infectious and then spread the disease to others. Quarantine can help slow or stop this from happening. States generally have the power to enforce quarantines within their borders.

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. 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.
- 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 – and it is important to remind children – 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, door knobs and refrigerators.
- Store brand chlorine bleach can be used as a disinfectant by mixing $\frac{1}{4}$ 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 sleeve. Put used tissues in a wastebasket, and then wash hands with soap or use an alcohol-based rub.

Watch all household members for symptoms of respiratory illness.

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

Make sure supplies are on hand.

- Keep supplies of soap, tissues, and cleaning supplies handy.
- Make sure that tissues are available in all household rooms.

Millburn Township
Office of Emergency Management Coordinator,
Sergeant Peter Eakley
(973) 564-7001

Millburn Township Health Officer,
Louis Anello

To learn more about us, visit www.twp.millburn.nj.us/ or call (973) 564-7000.