

- **Stock your pantry.** Store a supply of food that has a long shelf life and does not need to be cooked. Your pantry should include things like canned tuna, canned sardines, peanut butter, crackers, powdered milk and bottled water. Even if a pandemic doesn't occur, this food will help you get through a power outage from a winter storm or a hurricane.

- **Don't wait until the last minute.** Make it a habit to fill prescriptions before they run out...or keep your car's gas tank full.

- **Stay informed.** Public health officials will work with the news media to reach you in the event of a pandemic flu.

How do I limit spread of germs and prevent infection?

Even if a pandemic flu never occurs, these measures will slow the spread of illness like the common cold, the seasonal flu and lots of other bugs that can make you sick:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based gels.
- Always cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Use a disposable tissue and throw it away at once. Wash your hands again.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Detach for easy posting.

For more information

about what your community is doing to prepare for a pandemic flu, contact your local health department or the Department of Health and Human Services' CARE-LINE at

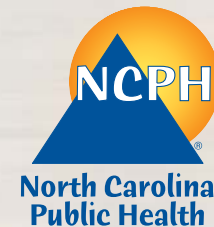
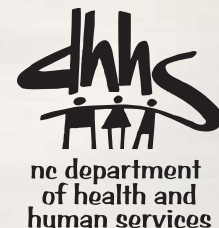
1-800-662-7030.



N.C. DHHS CARE-LINE

1-800-662-7030

TTY: 1-877-452-2514

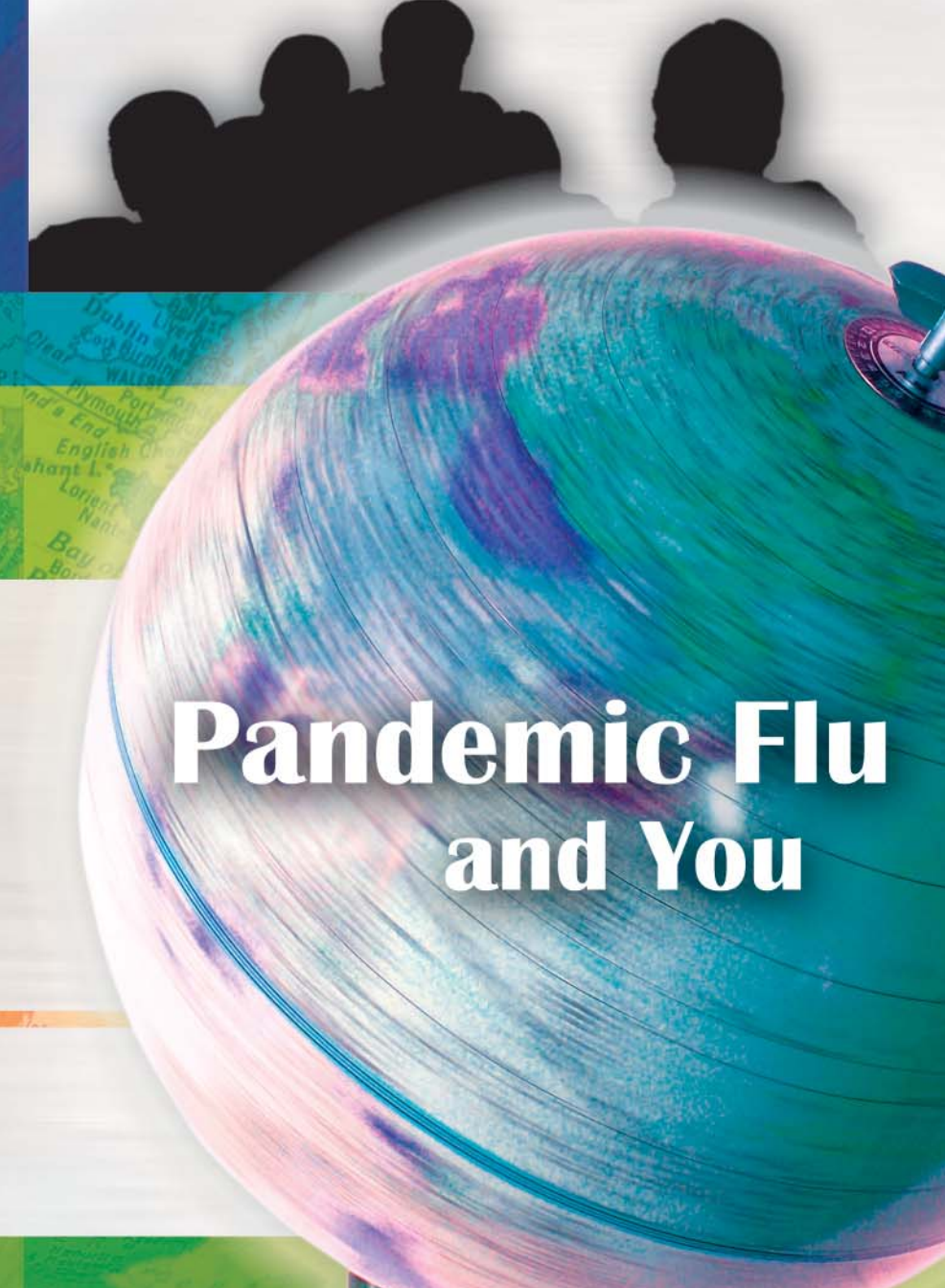


State of North Carolina
 Department of Health and Human Services
 Division of Public Health

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Pandemic Flu and You



There is no pandemic flu in the world today. No one knows when or where a pandemic may begin or how severe it will be.

But, North Carolina must be ready.

The North Carolina Division of Public Health and local health departments are leading those preparation efforts.

Now is the time to prepare for pandemic flu. This preparation will help you cope with other emergencies, like hurricanes or ice storms.



Photo credit: James Gathany



Confused about the difference between seasonal, bird and pandemic flu?

What is the Seasonal Flu?

This is the yearly flu. North Carolina's flu season runs from October through April. The seasonal flu is a respiratory virus that is spread person to person. This wintertime respiratory illness is marked by a fever and symptoms like coughing and sneezing. People usually have some immunity against the seasonal flu. There is also a vaccine available to prevent the seasonal flu. This vaccine must be given every year, beginning in the fall months.

What is Bird Flu?

Bird flu is just that – a flu that affects birds. There has been a lot of attention focused on a bird flu outbreak that began in Asia in the late 1990s. That strain of flu, which is called H5N1, is highly contagious among birds. A small number of people have been infected with the virus through very close contact with birds, or very close contact with another person with this strain of bird flu.

What is the Pandemic Flu?

A pandemic flu occurs when a new flu virus appears in humans, spreads easily from person-to-person, causes serious illness, and moves across the globe. Flu pandemics are caused by new flu viruses. Because they are new, humans have little or no immunity to them, leading to rapid disease spread from person to person. **THERE IS CURRENTLY NO PANDEMIC FLU.**

What is the state of North Carolina doing to prepare for a pandemic flu?

North Carolina public health has a history of responding to emergency situations. Public health helps communities respond to and recover from natural disasters like hurricanes and ice storms as well as to new diseases. Public health professionals are working now to ensure that the state is prepared for a pandemic flu. They:

- Use technology to detect unusual illnesses at hospital emergency departments across North Carolina.
- Educate health care workers to be on the alert for signs of unusual illness.
- Prepare to distribute vaccines and antiviral medications in the event of a pandemic.
- Work with education, business, community and faith groups to help everyone prepare for a pandemic.

If a pandemic occurs, how can I protect myself and my family?

Public health officials will take action to slow the spread of the disease. Actions you can take include:

- Avoid unnecessary social gatherings, meetings or travel.
- Allow workers to work at home or to limit close contact at work.
- Avoid large gatherings like ball games or concerts.
- Make plans on what you could or could not do if children were at home from schools because authorities may decide to close schools and child care facilities.

How should I prepare for a pandemic flu?

- **Learn and practice respiratory etiquette.** That means covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing so you don't spread germs, avoiding touching your eyes or nose unless you've washed your hands, and staying home while ill.
- **Get healthy.** A healthy person is better able to deal with an infection like the flu. Now is the time to get your weight under control, be physically fit, stop using tobacco and cut back on alcohol use.
- **Keep your immunizations up-to-date,** particularly the pneumonia vaccine that is recommended for seniors and others at high-risk for flu complications.