

# **Your Guide To**

## ***Preparing for Pandemic Flu***

provided by the  
City of Calimesa



## **Your Safety.**

### **That's why public health is working.**

**Because of the potential for a pandemic flu, the City of Calimesa wants you to know more about this possible health threat. This guide includes basic information about pandemic flu, what individuals and families can do to prepare for a pandemic flu outbreak. It also provides some web-sites you can get additional information.**

# What You Should Know

Pandemic 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, cause serious illness and death. When new pandemic flu spreads it creates a public health emergency. The emergency will not be like 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 be temporarily closed. 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 personal action to be better prepared. This publication is provided to assist the residents of the City of Calimesa to understand and prepare for any pandemic.

## What is Swine Flu

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes 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, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

### **Are there human infections with swine flu in the U.S.?**

In late March and early April 2009, cases of human infection with swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses were first reported in Southern California and near San Antonio, Texas. Other U.S. states have reported cases of swine flu infection in humans and cases have been reported internationally as well. An updated case count of confirmed swine flu infections in the United States is kept at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm> CDC and local and state health agencies are working together to investigate this situation.

### **Is this swine flu virus contagious?**

CDC has determined that this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

### **What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?**

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

### **How does swine flu spread?**

Spread of this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

### **How can someone with the flu infect someone else?**

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

### **What should I do to keep from getting the flu?**

First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

### **Are there medicines to treat swine flu?**

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine influenza viruses. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).

### **How long can an infected person spread swine flu to others?**

People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

### **What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?**

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

### **How long can viruses live outside the body?**

We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. Frequent handwashing will help you reduce the chance of getting contamination from these common surfaces.

## **What Can You Do**

PREPARING FOR A PANDEMIC FLU CAN REDUCE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING SICK AND HELP LIMIT THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE. Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, exercising daily, getting enough rest and drinking fluids and by getting your seasonal flu shot. Stay informed by keeping up-to-date information on a possible pandemic listening to radio and television, reading news stories and checking the web.

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

- Wash hands frequently with 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.
- Have any non-prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they will be cared for if they get sick.

## Your Pandemic Flu Emergency Kit

As many as 1 in 4 people could get sick during a pandemic, with many seriously ill. Services and supplies we count 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 different during a pandemic flu and services could be disrupted, make sure you have these items in your emergency preparedness kit:

- Two weeks 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 two weeks.
- Two weeks worth of prescription medicines.
- 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.
- Re-hydration Solution, for example Pedialyte for kids. Gatorade for adults and teens. (Re-hydration Solution for Adults and Teens: 4 cups of clean water, 2 tablespoons of sugar, 1 teaspoon of salt - Mix all ingredients until the sugar disappears. You can drink the solution at room temperature. NOTE: Do not boil the solution because it will reduce the solution's helpfulness.)
- Cell phone and charger.
- Supply of 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.

Additional information may be obtained for Emergency Preparedness Plans and Kits from the American Red Cross - [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or 1-800-951-5600

# SEASONAL FLU vs PANDEMIC FLU

**Seasonal** - Usually follows a predictable pattern, typically every year in winter. There is usually some protection built up in a person from having the flu before.

**Pandemic** - Does not happen often - only three times in the 20th Century. The last time was 1968. Since this new pandemic flu hasn't been seen before, there is no immunity.

**Seasonal** - Healthy adults are not usually at risk for any serious complications.

**Pandemic** - Healthy people may be at risk for serious complications.

**Seasonal** - The medical community can usually meet public and patient needs.

**Pandemic** - The medical community will be overwhelmed.

**Seasonal** - Vaccines are developed before the flu season, based on known virus strains.

**Pandemic** - Vaccine developed early may not be effective. Once an effective vaccine is developed, it may not be available for several months.

**Seasonal** - Supplies of antiviral drugs are usually available.

**Pandemic** - May not have any effective antiviral drugs or the supply may be filled.

**Seasonal** - Average number of deaths in the US is about 36,000 a year.

**Pandemic** - The number of deaths would be much higher worldwide it could be millions.

**Seasonal** - Regular flu symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, and muscle pain.

**Pandemic** - Symptoms would be more serious and there would be more medical complications.

**Seasonal** - A small impact on the community with sick people staying home from work and school.

**Pandemic** - Big impact on the community. There could be travel restrictions, school closings, limited business hours or closings, and cancellation of public gatherings.

**Seasonal** - Small impact on US and world economy.

**Pandemic** - Could have a big impact on us and world economy.

## 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(s) WITHIN your home.

- The person(s) 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(s) are 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 - and it is important to remind children - should wash their hands with soap between contacts 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 chlorine bleach mixture.
- Store brand chlorine bleach can be used as a disinfectant by mixing 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 sleeves. Put used tissues in wastebasket, and then wash hands with soap or use an alcohol-base rub.
- Even when a person is wearing a mask, they should cough or sneeze into their sleeve.

Watch all household members for symptoms or 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 on hand.

- Keep supplies or 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.

# 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, follow those instructions.

- **WHEN YOU ARE SICK, STAY HOME**
- **STAY AWAY FROM PUBLIC VENUES - sporting events, movies, festivals, etc.**

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 and/or Quarantine instructions.

**ISOLATION:** is for people who are already ill. 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 disease. People who are isolated can be cared for in their homes, 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 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 they spread the disease to others. Quarantine can help to slow or stop this from happening. States generally have the power to enforce quarantines within their borders.

## Where to Learn More

Keep informed on a possible pandemic flu by listening to radio and television, and reading news stories about pandemic flu.

Go to [www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org](http://www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org) - Riverside County Public Health, provides Fact Sheets on Pandemic Flu, Avian Flu and Isolation and Quarantine

Go to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) - for general information about pandemic flu and other health related information

Go to [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) - for updates on national and international flu, planning guides and additional checklist.

Go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) - for additional information you will need to make your own emergency preparedness plan and kits.

### **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

Go to <http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel> - for general travel warnings