

**Phone.** If there are disruptions to power, you will need to have a phone that does not run on power from an electrical outlet (a standard “wired” or “landline” phone). Cordless phones will not operate when the power is out, however cellular phones will.

**Medications and equipment.** If you must take medications on a regular basis, be sure to have enough of a supply to last for several days.

**Prepare ahead.** Talk to your friends and family about emergency plans. Make sure you have a plan to check in with elderly parents and friends, that children know who to contact in an emergency and that you know your family’s medical histories, social security numbers and other basic information.

### What is the Nevada State Health Division doing to prepare for a pandemic?

The Nevada State Health Division, working with local health districts and departments statewide, monitors each flu season in several ways:

- We ask doctors and others who see patients to count the number of patients they see each week with a flu-like illness.
- We ask nursing homes to let us know if their patients begin to get sick with something that looks like flu.
- We ask doctors and laboratories to send samples to the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory from patients with flu-like illness so we can try to grow flu from the sample. This helps us

to know if the virus circulating in our state is the same strain that is active in other parts of the United States, and whether or not that year’s flu vaccine protects against the virus we have identified.

• We follow the trends in the number of people who die in Nevada’s larger cities from flu and pneumonia – a serious lung infection that can be a complication of flu.

Additionally, the Nevada State Public Health Laboratories perform specialized testing for flu and send samples of influenza to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), where they use information from Nevada and other states to determine what strains of flu should be covered in each year’s flu vaccine. All year long, we ask doctors to report any serious or fatal illness where they were unable to find a cause for the illness, so we can do testing for flu. We monitor updates from the CDC and the World Health Organization on influenza vaccine developments and events related to flu, including the outbreak of avian flu in Asia. We work with other state and local government agencies and hospitals in Nevada and our neighbor states to develop response plans specific to pandemic flu.



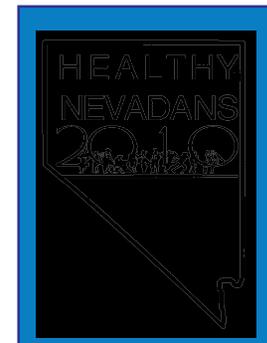
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Pandemic Influenza  
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## What is a pandemic influenza (flu)?

A pandemic is an outbreak of disease that happens in many different countries at the same time. A pandemic of influenza, or flu, occurs when a new flu virus rapidly spreads from country-to-country around the world. This rapid spread of flu can happen because most people will not be immune to a new flu virus, and it is possible that a vaccine against the virus will not be available until months after the new virus first appears. In addition, people with flu who travel from country-to-country in airplanes can be a source of infection, as occurred in the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in Asia and Canada in 2003. Pandemics are not just particularly bad flu seasons. In fact, they are not seasonal at all; they can happen at anytime. A flu pandemic may be caused by any type of emerging flu virus that is new to humans, including the avian (bird) flu strain, H5N1. In the 20th century, several flu pandemics occurred - the biggest one in 1918. During that pandemic, at least 500,000 Americans died, and it has been estimated that there were as many as 10 million deaths worldwide.

## What is the difference between a pandemic and an epidemic?

An epidemic is an outbreak of disease that occurs in one or several limited areas, like a city, state or country. Once the disease spreads beyond the borders of several countries, and affects many countries across the globe, it is called a pandemic.

## How is pandemic flu treated?

The virus that would cause a pandemic flu virus will have undergone such a dramatic change that current flu vaccines will probably offer no protection and most, if not all people may have no natural immunity. Once a pandemic flu virus appears, it takes at least six months to develop a vaccine that precisely matches the composition of the new virus. This means that there is currently no vaccine to protect against pandemic flu. Scientists are now studying the current bird flu virus in Asia for clues on future vaccine development.

## Are there other methods to prevent one from getting a pandemic flu virus?

Good health habits, such as frequent hand washing, cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue, stay home if you are ill, can help protect against infection from all forms of flu.

## Do we know when the next flu pandemic will occur?

Influenza pandemics occur naturally, statistically two or three times every 100 years, and are impossible to accurately predict. However, scientists are monitoring the current bird flu outbreak in Asia and Eastern Europe for changes in the virus that would allow it to spread quickly among people.

## What can I do to prepare for pandemic flu?

It's a good idea to prepare for a pandemic much as you would for an earthquake, flood or other disaster. A pandemic is caused by a strain of virus that is new - chances are, most, if not all people would have little to no natural immunity and the virus would be highly contagious, from person to person. Therefore, it may be necessary to protect yourself and others from getting the virus by remaining in your home for several days. Or, you may find yourself staying home from work to care for sick children, or even working from home. The Nevada State Health Division recommends taking the following steps for personal preparedness:

**Items for personal comfort.** You may want to have extra items on hand to make your time at home more comfortable, like food, water, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toilet paper, cleaners and activities for children.

**Cash.** Make sure to have some cash on hand. If necessary, you may be able to have items delivered to your door.

**Pets.** Don't forget your pets. Make sure you have enough food and water for them and other necessities like extra litter.

**Large trash bags.** Garbage service may be disrupted or postponed for many days. Have bags on hand to store garbage safely.