

# Pandemic Quick Facts

What is a pandemic?

A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity, it becomes widespread, and for which there is no vaccine.

What would be the impact of a pandemic?

An especially severe influenza could lead to high levels of illness, death, social disruption, and economic loss. When a vaccine is developed, the need will outstrip supplies. Antiviral drugs are also likely to be inadequate.

Why is this suddenly a concern?

The H1N1 virus (Swine Influenza)

- is especially virulent in children 5 to 19 years of age.
- is being spread by humans.
- is like other influenza viruses; it continues to evolve.
- is active worldwide.

Will getting a seasonal flu shot protect me?

No, at present, vaccines are developed to protect you from existing and identified “human influenza viruses” (seasonal flu). To date the H1N1 vaccine is not available.

When will an H1N1 vaccine be developed?

A vaccine is being developed for distribution to begin by late October/early November. Most early vaccine will be used for children.

What are signs and symptoms of H1N1?

- Similar symptoms to seasonal flu.
- Fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.
- For some, symptoms may include diarrhea and vomiting.
- Right now, overall severity is similar to seasonal flu.

How can we prepare?

- Be on the lookout for ill students and staff.
- Exclude from school 3-5 days.
- Return to school 24 hours after resolution of fever.
- Family members of sick person should attend work/school as usual.
- Fever = 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater.
- Monitor attendance.
- Closing school considered the last option and is not recommended.

What can I do to protect myself and others?

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue (or the inside of your elbow) when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Practice social distancing during flu outbreak.
- Stay home if you are sick until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.

Where can I get more information?

[www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)  
[www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us)