



# Pandemic Influenza Toolkit for Ohio Schools



This resource was designed by the Ohio Department of Health to assist schools to prepare for a pandemic.

*Plans are nothing. Planning is everything.*

Dwight Eisenhower

# Pandemic Influenza Toolkit for Ohio Schools

Ohio Department of Health  
Division of Family and Community Health Services  
Bureau of Community Health Services and Systems Development

## Developed by

School and Adolescent Health, School Nursing Program

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- Contra Costa County (California) County Health Services and Contra Costa Office of Education
- Oakland County (Michigan) Health Division
- Orange County (California) Department of Education and Orange County Health Care Agency
- Washington County (Oregon) Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Education
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Special Note

The information contained in this toolkit is a compilation of materials representing the current knowledge of planning considerations for schools for a pandemic influenza event. As preparing for a pandemic requires broad community planning, schools are strongly encouraged to work with their local health department and other local emergency planning agencies as they

develop their individual plans. It is important to note that each board of education will have unique local issues to consider as they develop school policies and procedures for their specific district. The information in this resource is not meant to supersede local school board policies or local health department initiatives, but rather to inform and provide guidance.

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# What is a Pandemic?

A pandemic is an epidemic occurring world-wide or over a very wide area, crossing inter-

national boundaries and usually affecting large numbers of people.

In the 20th century there were three Pandemics:

- 1918** 500,000 deaths in the U.S. and at least 50 million deaths worldwide.
- 1957** 70,000 deaths in the U.S. and up to 2 million deaths worldwide.
- 1968** 34,000 deaths in the U.S. and 700,000 deaths worldwide.



## Characteristics and Challenges of a Pandemic

Some pandemics are mild. Some are fierce. The next pandemic could strike one in every three people on the planet.

### Rapid Worldwide Spread

- For example, should a pandemic flu virus emerge, a global spread is considered inevitable.
- Preparedness activities should assume that the entire world population would be susceptible.

### Medical Supplies Inadequate

- The need for vaccine is likely to occur.
- There is a current shortage of effective antiviral drugs.
- A pandemic flu can create a shortage of hospital beds and/or medical supplies.
- Difficult decisions will need to be made regarding who gets limited antiviral drugs and vaccines.

### Health Care Systems Overloaded

- A substantial percentage of the world's population will require some form of medical care. Infection and illness rates are expected to soar.
- Death rates may be high due to:
  - The number of people who become infected.
  - The strength of the virus.
  - The underlying characteristics and vulnerability of affected populations.

### Economic and Social Disruption

- Travel bans, closings of schools and businesses and cancellations of events could have a major impact on communities and residents.
- Care for sick family members and fear of exposure could result in significant worker absenteeism.

Information from

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov>

## School Action Steps For Pandemic Influenza

The following is a list of important actions schools should take before, during and after a pandemic flu outbreak. Pandemic flu can have several cycles or waves so this list may need to be repeated.

### **Preparedness and Planning Phase: Before an Outbreak**

- Create a pandemic flu plan. See the School District (K-12) Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist and the Basic Components of Pandemic Planning documents found in this chapter.
- Work with local health and emergency preparedness officials to develop your district pandemic plan.
- Determine the roles and responsibilities of school staff to prevent the spread of flu.
- Train school staff in flu-symptom recognition. A person who is infected with influenza does not always show the symptoms right away and the severity of the symptoms may vary.
- Have a system of disease recognition or standard surveillance in your school to notify your staff and local health department of increased absenteeism.
- Promote good hygiene of students and staff. Use simple ways to reduce the spread of flu by encouraging good “respiratory etiquette” (covering coughs and sneezes), frequent hand washing and clean work areas. (See samples of posters in this toolkit.)
- Decide to what extent you will encourage or require students and staff to stay home when they are ill. Your local health department will provide guidelines in the event of a public health emergency.
- Identify students and staff who are most vulnerable to serious illness (immune compromised, chronic illness, etc). Encourage them to talk to their health care providers regarding special precautions. Some parents may need to be more cautious in keeping their children out of school.

- Develop alternative learning strategies such as television or other local cable stations, teleconferencing or lessons on CDs.
- Educate staff, students and parents about the difference between seasonal flu, bird flu and pandemic flu and important hygiene practices to prevent any type of flu. See sample newsletter number 1.
- Work with local health officials and emergency preparedness officials to determine if school facilities and resources may be needed as a part of your community response plan.

### **Response: During an Outbreak**

- Begin heightened disease surveillance reporting.
- Communicate with your local health department on a regular basis.
- Provide education and communication to staff, students and parents regarding school and community health concerns. See sample newsletters—numbers 3, 4 and 5.
- Discuss with your local health department the possibility of canceling non-academic events and/or closing schools as a part of your community’s disease containment measures.

### **Recovery: Following an Outbreak**

- Work with your local health department to determine when school can reopen.
- Communicate/educate staff, students and parents regarding school schedule and expectations.
- Continue heightened disease surveillance and report any new waves of disease to the local health department.
- Plan for the psychosocial needs of staff, students and parents following the trauma of a pandemic event.

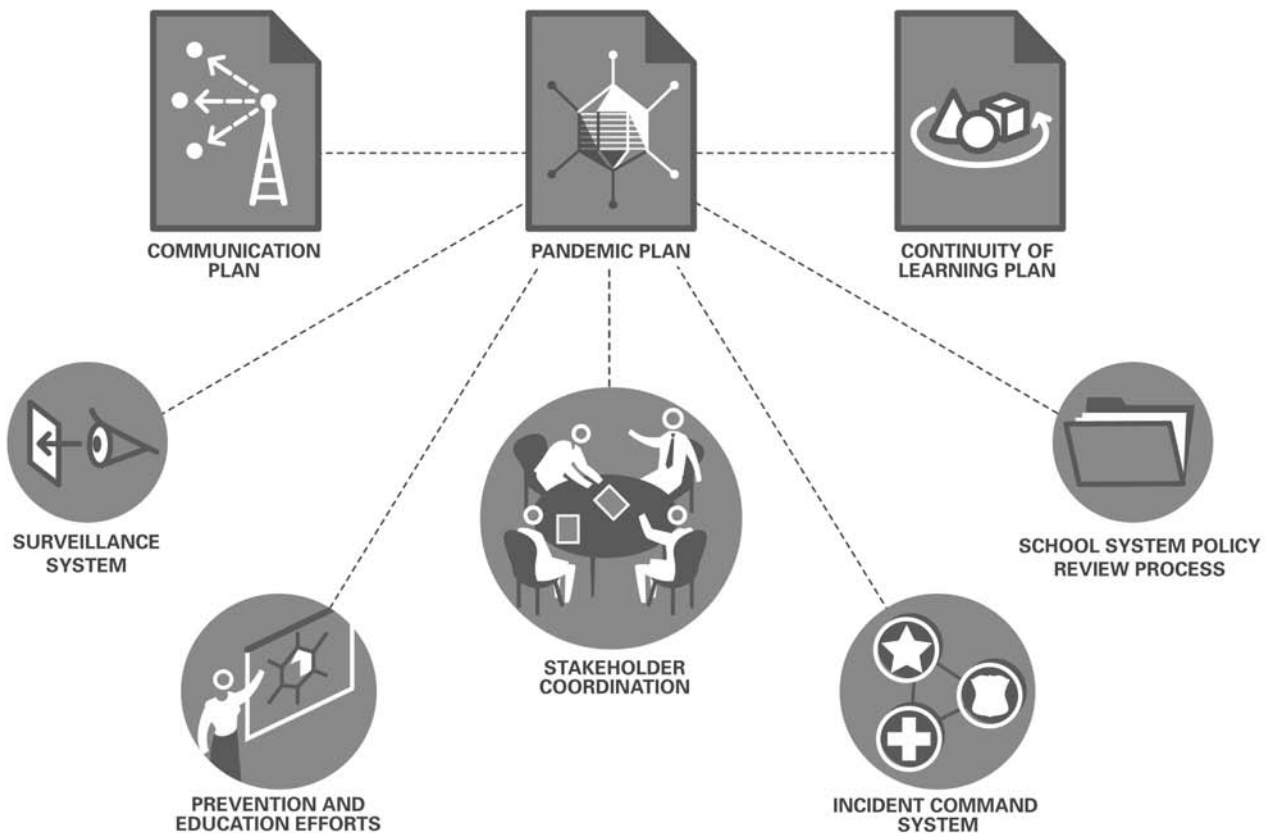
## Planning Assumption from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

1. Susceptibility to the pandemic influenza virus will be universal.
2. Efficient and sustained person-to-person transmission signals an imminent pandemic.
3. The clinical disease attack rate will likely be 30 percent or higher in the overall population during the pandemic. Illness rates will be highest among school-aged children (about 40 percent) and decline with age. Among working adults, an average of 20 percent will become ill during a community outbreak.
  - a. Some persons will become infected but not develop clinically significant symptoms. Asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic individuals can transmit infection and develop immunity to subsequent infection.
4. Of those who become ill with influenza, 50 percent will seek outpatient medical care.
  - a. With the availability of effective antiviral drugs for treatment, this proportion may be higher in the next pandemic.
5. The number of hospitalizations and deaths will depend on the virulence of the pandemic virus. Estimates differ about ten-fold between more and less severe scenarios. Planning should include the more severe scenario.
  - a. Risk groups for severe and fatal infection cannot be predicted with certainty but are likely to include infants, the elderly, pregnant women and persons with chronic medical conditions.
6. Rates of absenteeism will depend on the severity of the pandemic.
  - a. In a severe pandemic, absenteeism attributable to illness, the need to care for ill family members and fear of infection may reach 40 percent during the peak weeks of a community outbreak, with lower rates of absenteeism during the weeks before and after the peak.
  - b. Certain public health measures (closing schools, quarantining household contacts of infected individuals, “snow days”) are likely to increase rates of absenteeism.
7. The typical incubation period (interval between infection and onset of symptoms) for influenza is approximately two days.
8. Persons who become ill may shed virus and can transmit infection for up to one day before the onset of illness. Viral shedding and the risk of transmission will be greatest during the first two days of illness. Children usually shed the greatest amount of virus and therefore are likely to pose the greatest risk for transmission.
9. On average, infected persons will transmit infection to approximately two other people.
10. In an affected community, a pandemic outbreak will last about six to eight weeks.
11. Multiple waves (periods during which community outbreaks occur across the country) of illness could occur with each wave lasting two to three months. Historically, the largest waves have occurred in the fall and winter, but the seasonality of a pandemic cannot be predicted with certainty.

## Basic Components of Pandemic Planning



- Every district should have an Emergency Management Plan.
- The Plan should be flexible to encompass all hazards.
- Every district should develop a Pandemic Flu Plan.
- Plans should address four phases of emergency management planning: Mitigation and Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery. For more information: [www.ed.gov/emergencyplan](http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan).
- Plans should be practiced on a regular basis.
- Plans should be developed and communicated in an interactive manner with stakeholders, including parents, faculty, other community partners and first responders.
- Plans should be based on sound data and information; [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) should be the main resource for pandemic planning and information.
- Plans should be continually reviewed and updated as new information is available. The complete planning checklist can be viewed at [www.pandemic.flu.gov](http://www.pandemic.flu.gov).





# Basic Components of Pandemic Planning

## Every district should have an Emergency Management Plan that:



- Addresses all four phases of emergency management planning (Mitigation and Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.)
- Is flexible enough to address multiple hazards (be "all-hazard plans.")
- Is practiced on a regular basis.
- Is developed in an interactive, cross-cutting manner, in collaboration with community partners and stakeholders.
- Is based upon sound data and information.
- Includes provisions for being continually reviewed and updated regularly.
- Is coordinated with community pandemic influenza planning efforts, as well as state policy and planning efforts.



### Pandemic Plan

This plan is built upon components in existing emergency management plans and would contain elements unique to an influenza pandemic.



### Communication Plan

- Identify audiences and key messages (students parents, staff, etc.)
- Focus on clear, accurate, consistent, and timely communications.
- Identify trusted spokesperson (also, identify who will be lead for health matters.)
- Identify trusted media partners.
- Establish redundant communications methods identified in advance (primary, secondary and tertiary methods identified and all parties are familiar with them.)



### Plan for continuity of learning or instruction

- Consider alternate learning strategies.
- Consider potential restructuring of school calendar.



### Identify stakeholders and partners

**Identify a contact within the local public health department** and collaborate with that entity to create complementary plans, coordinate with other partners, and communicate consistently with the public.

### Identify and coordinate with other key stakeholders,

such as law enforcement, school security personnel, local emergency management office, businesses, community and faith-based organizations.



### Review and refine policies and authorities

Review school district's or school's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and Business Continuity Plans (BCP), which outline procedures for continued function during an extended emergency. Consider:

- Essential functions, goods, and services that must be maintained under a variety of conditions;
- Essential tasks that can be performed from other locations such as home, as well as technology support necessary to implement such measures;
- Essential people and material support;
- Delegations of authority and
- Personnel/Human Resources policies (leave, disability, payroll, potential high absenteeism).

**Identify legal authorities** for school closures, limitations on responsibilities and functions (such as school lunch provision), and school's potential responsibilities and liabilities.

### Review and refine supply policies and contracts

including potentially ordering and warehousing items such as tissues, soap, or hand sanitizer.



### Initiate or expand prevention and education efforts

- Conduct preventive hand-washing and cough/sneezing etiquette campaigns.
- Encourage staff, faculty, and students to stay home when ill.
- Provide information to parents, staff and students about elements of pandemic plan.



### Create and implement a surveillance system

in partnership with state and/or local health departments to identify and track student absences due to illness, which would allow the rapid detection of unusual changes or trends in student health.



### Develop an Incident Command System (ICS)

specific to a pandemic, that identifies roles and responsibilities of educators, law enforcement, and health officials in advance of an incident.



### Consider and plan with community partners to address issues specific to your school environment,

- such as:
- Students with special needs, including those who are in special education, receiving supplemental services at school, English Language Learners, or have special health care needs;
  - Working with Child Nutrition Directors to help families identify sources for feeding programs for students who receive meals at school in the event of long-term school closures;
  - Potential social services needed during and after pandemic has ended;
  - Possible alternative uses of school buildings during a pandemic (such as for mass immunizations or hospitals);
  - Potential uses of school buses during pandemic and if/how this affects contracts;
  - Current alternative uses for schools and determine necessary policies/procedures under school closures;
  - Capacity to address requirements for cleaning the building if it was used for community health needs or if there were sick students;
  - Fiscal, academic, emotional and physical recovery issues, including;
  - Return to learning;
  - Ability of students, family, and staff to access available mental health supports, particularly during a crisis if schools are cancelled;
  - Bereavement needs; and
  - Availability of mental health service providers, including community and faith-based organizations.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT (K-12) PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING CHECKLIST

Local educational agencies (LEAs) play an integral role in protecting the health and safety of their district's staff, students and their families. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed the following checklist to assist LEAs in developing and/or improving plans to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic.

Building a strong relationship with the local health department is critical for developing a meaningful plan. The key planning activities in this checklist build upon existing contingency plans recommended for school districts by the U.S. Department of Education (Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide For Schools and Communities <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>).

Further information on pandemic influenza can be found at [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov).

### 1. Planning and Coordination:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the authority responsible for declaring a public health emergency at the state and local levels and for officially activating the district's pandemic influenza response plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify for all stakeholders the legal authorities responsible for executing the community operational plan, especially those authorities responsible for case identification, isolation, quarantine, movement restriction, healthcare services, emergency care, and mutual aid.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As part of the district's crisis management plan, address pandemic influenza preparedness, involving all relevant stakeholders in the district (e.g., lead emergency response agency, district administrators, local public health representatives, school health and mental health professionals, teachers, food services director, and parent representatives). This committee is accountable for articulating strategic priorities and overseeing the development of the district's operational pandemic plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with local and/or state health departments and other community partners to establish organizational structures, such as the Incident Command System, to manage the execution of the district's pandemic flu plan. An Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized organization structure that establishes a line of authority and common terminology and procedures to be followed in response to an incident. Ensure compatibility between the district's established ICS and the local/state health department's and state education department's ICS.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Delineate accountability and responsibility as well as resources for key stakeholders engaged in planning and executing specific components of the operational plan. Assure that the plan includes timelines, deliverables, and performance measures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with your local and/or state health department and state education agencies to coordinate with their pandemic plans. Assure that pandemic planning is coordinated with the community's pandemic plan as well as the state department of education's plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Test the linkages between the district's Incident Command System and the local/state health department's and state education department's Incident Command System.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contribute to the local health department's operational plan for surge capacity of healthcare and other services to meet the needs of the community (e.g., schools designated as contingency hospitals, schools feeding vulnerable populations, community utilizing LEA's healthcare and mental health staff). In an affected community, at least two pandemic disease waves (about 6-8 weeks each) are likely over several months.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incorporate into the pandemic influenza plan the requirements of students with special needs (e.g., low income students who rely on the school food service for daily meals), those in special facilities (e.g., juvenile justice facilities) as well as those who do not speak English as their first language.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in exercises of the community's pandemic plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with the local health department to address provision of psychosocial support services for the staff, students and their families during and after a pandemic.





## Pandemic Influenza *Toolkit for Ohio Schools*

### 1. Planning and Coordination (cont.):

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider developing in concert with the local health department a surveillance system that would alert the local health department to a substantial increase in absenteeism among students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Implement an exercise/drill to test your pandemic plan and revise it periodically.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share what you have learned from developing your preparedness and response plan with other LEAs as well as private schools within the community to improve community response efforts.

### 2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop scenarios describing the potential impact of a pandemic on student learning (e.g., student and staff absences), school closings, and extracurricular activities based on having various levels of illness among students and staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop alternative procedures to assure continuity of instruction (e.g., web-based distance instruction, telephone trees, mailed lessons and assignments, instruction via local radio or television stations) in the event of district school closures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a continuity of operations plan for essential central office functions including payroll and ongoing communication with students and parents.

### 3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with the local health department to implement effective infection prevention policies and procedures that help limit the spread of influenza at schools in the district (e.g. promotion of hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette). Make good hygiene a habit now in order to help protect children from many infectious diseases such as flu.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies (e.g., soap, alcohol-based/waterless hand hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies and procedures for students and staff sick leave absences unique to a pandemic influenza (e.g., non-punitive, liberal leave).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish sick leave policies for staff and students suspected to be ill or who become ill at school. Staff and students with known or suspected pandemic influenza should not remain at school and should return only after their symptoms resolve and they are physically ready to return to school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies for transporting ill students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assure that the LEA pandemic plan for school-based health facilities conforms to those recommended for health care settings (Refer to <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan">www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan</a> ).

### 4. Communications Planning:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assess readiness to meet communication needs in preparation for an influenza pandemic, including regular review, testing, and updating of communication plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a dissemination plan for communication with staff, students, and families, including lead spokespersons and links to other communication networks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure language, culture and reading level appropriateness in communications by including community leaders representing different language and/or ethnic groups on the planning committee, asking for their participation both in document planning and the dissemination of public health messages within their communities.

**4. Communications Planning (cont.):**

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop and test platforms (e.g., hotlines, telephone trees, dedicated websites, and local radio or TV stations) for communicating pandemic status and actions to school district staff, students, and families.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop and maintain up-to-date communications contacts of key public health and education stakeholders and use the network to provide regular updates as the influenza pandemic unfolds.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assure the provision of redundant communication systems/channels that allow for the expedited transmission and receipt of information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advise district staff, students and families where to find up-to-date and reliable pandemic information from federal, state and local public health sources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate information about the LEA's pandemic influenza preparedness and response plan (e.g., continuity of instruction, community containment measures).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate information from public health sources covering routine infection control (e.g., hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette), pandemic influenza fundamentals (e.g., signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission) as well as personal and family protection and response strategies (e.g., guidance for the at-home care of ill students and family members).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anticipate the potential fear and anxiety of staff, students, and families as a result of rumors and misinformation and plan communications accordingly.



## Public Health Instructions During a Pandemic Influenza Event

During a pandemic flu, people may be asked or required to take steps to reduce the spread of disease. Infection control in the community should focus on “social distancing,” promoting respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette and hand hygiene to decrease exposure to others. A limitation on movement may be implemented to protect the health individuals by reducing or limiting the spread of disease.

### Avoid Large Groups

People, even those who are well, should stay away from gatherings of people such as sporting events, movies and festivals. During a flu pandemic, these kinds of events could be cancelled because large gatherings of people help spread the flu virus.

### Stay Home

People who are sick should stay home. Children should not go to school if they are sick. To limit the spread of disease during a pandemic, staying home will be absolutely necessary. It is extremely important to listen to what your community health leaders are advising and to follow their instructions.

### Stay Home

“Sheltering” means to seek shelter (usually in your own home) and remain there during an emergency rather than evacuating the area. During a pandemic, individuals acting out of their own interest would limit their social interaction so they are not exposed to illness. During a pandemic, “sheltering” may be necessary for a period of days or weeks, so it is extremely important that families stock their homes to accommodate a lengthy period of sheltering.

### Isolation

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. Individuals who are isolated can be cared for in their homes, in hospitals or other health care facilities. Isolation is usually voluntary but local, state and federal government have the power to require the isolation of sick people to protect the public.

### Quarantine

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 have been exposed to the disease. They may still become infectious and spread the disease to others. Quarantine can help to slow this from happening. State and local health departments have the power to enforce quarantines within their borders. Ohio Revised Code Section 3707.04 authorizes the local Board of Health to make such rules and regulations as are “wise and necessary for the protection of the health of the people of the community and the state” within a local health jurisdiction.



## Public Health Authority and Communicable Diseases

Selected statutes from the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) that may impact schools during a public health emergency include:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| ORC 3701.13 | Powers of department.  |
| ORC 3701.23 | Duty to report certain diseases, illnesses, health conditions, infectious agents and toxins. |
| ORC 3701.81 | Spreading contagion.   |
| ORC 3707.04 | Quarantine regulations.  |
| ORC 3707.06 | Notice to be given of prevalence of infectious diseases.                                     |
| ORC 3707.16 | Attendance at gathering by quarantined person prohibited.                                    |
| ORC 3707.26 | Board shall inspect schools and may close them; minimum standards for inspections.           |
| ORC 3707.31 | Establishment of quarantine hospital.  |
| ORC 3707.34 | Authority of health commissioner regarding quarantine and isolation provisions.              |

Selected sections from the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) that may impact schools during a public health emergency:

- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| OAC 3701-3-02 | Diseases to be reported. |
| OAC 3701-3-13 | Isolation requirement.   |

The above sections can be viewed at:

[http://www.onlinedocs.andersonpublishing.com/oh/  
lpExt.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm&dcp=PORC](http://www.onlinedocs.andersonpublishing.com/oh/lpExt.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm&dcp=PORC)

# PADEMIC PLANNING

## Ten Things You Need to Know About Pandemic Influenza

### 1 There is no pandemic flu at this time.

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new flu virus for which there is little or no immunity in the human population emerges and begins to spread easily from person to person. You can prepare by being informed and taking appropriate actions to decrease your risk of illness before the start of a pandemic.

### 2 The flu in the news recently is the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian (bird) flu virus.

The H5N1 virus primarily infects birds, but more than half the people who have contracted it from infected birds have died. There is no evidence of H5N1 in Ohio at this time, but because birds can also carry other diseases such as *Salmonella*, precautions are recommended. Avoid close contact with an infected bird's respiratory secretions, saliva or feces or any surface that has been contaminated with these substances.

### 3 Scientists are concerned the H5N1 virus may mutate to cause the next pandemic flu. History shows if this virus does not cause the next pandemic, another will.

So far, the spread of H5N1 virus from person to person has been limited. Nonetheless, because all influenza viruses have the ability to change, scientists are concerned the H5N1 virus may mutate to infect humans and spread easily from one person to another.

### 4 People can only "catch" bird flu from close contact with birds.

As of July 2006, H5N1 has not been detected in birds in Ohio. Should the H5N1 virus be found in Ohio, avoid contact with birds. If you do come into close contact, wash your hands and take steps to avoid carrying any bird excretions on your shoes or clothing.

### 5 A pandemic flu is different from seasonal flu.

Pandemic flu is different from seasonal flu because: symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent; health systems may be overwhelmed; healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications; occurs infrequently rather than every year.



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**6**

**During a pandemic there will likely be disruptions to our daily lives.**

When preparing for a possible emergency situation such as pandemic influenza, it's best to think first about the basics of survival, including fresh water, food and medical supplies. Because it may be necessary to protect yourself and others from spreading the flu virus, you may be asked to remain in your home for several days. Experts recommend you have at least a one-week stockpile of food, water and goods purchased over time to limit the financial impact and prevent store shortages.

Store a supply of drinking water; medical, first-aid and hygiene supplies; and other emergency supplies.

**7**

**Public health experts predict up to 40 percent of the population may be absent from work or school at any given time during a pandemic.**

During a pandemic, stay home from work or school if you are sick. Heed warnings about social distancing. If "snow days" are put into effect to lessen spread of the flu, stay home. During these times, do not put yourself or others in danger by getting together.

**8**

**Keeping your body healthy can help fight seasonal or pandemic flu.**

Although the currently circulating H5N1 virus has not achieved the ability to pass easily from human to human, health officials recommend people continue to take the same precautions they would to protect themselves from colds and seasonal flu. Make good respiratory etiquette a habit now.

Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues; wash hands frequently with warm water and soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; do not touch your eyes nose or mouth, germs spread this way; stay home when you are sick; and stay away from sick people as much as you can.

**9**

**At the start of a pandemic, vaccine and medication to combat symptoms will be in short supply.**

There currently is no commercially available vaccine to protect humans against the H5N1 virus. Vaccine can be developed only after a strain emerges; vaccine is different from antiviral medicines because vaccine prevents the virus from making people sick. Antiviral medicines treat a person's symptoms should they become sick. However, influenza viruses can become resistant to these drugs, so these medications may not always work. Additional studies are needed to determine the effectiveness of these medicines.

**10**

**Eating properly cooked poultry and poultry products is not a danger to humans.**

There is no evidence properly cooked poultry or eggs can be a source of infection for bird viruses. Proper cooking of poultry products (at least 165° F) inactivates this virus as well as other food-borne agents.



## Sample Memo to School Staff

*This is a sample memo that you can send to staff members during the planning phase. This memo outlines current efforts that are underway in preparing for a possible pandemic outbreak.*

To: All employees  
From:  
Date:  
Subject: Pandemic Influenza

Almost daily, we hear about avian (bird) flu and how it is spreading to countries around the world. While the avian flu is not yet in the United States, scientists expect it to arrive in the United States at some point in the future. The strain of avian flu that has most concerned scientists recently, H5N1, is not easily transmitted from person to person. Birds; however, are extremely susceptible to the virus. Scientists and public health professionals are concerned the avian flu virus may mutate so it can infect people and spread easily among humans. This would cause a worldwide flu outbreak, called a pandemic.

While our hope is that a pandemic will not occur, I want you to be aware that \_\_\_\_\_ School District is taking a proactive approach in addressing pandemic influenza issues for our schools. This includes the development of a written Pandemic Influenza Action Plan. We are working closely with local health officials to share the most up-to-date information as it becomes available. We will provide training opportunities for \_\_\_\_\_ employees. We are coordinating our effort with other community agencies involved in pandemic influenza planning and we will continue to monitor the situation so we are able to efficiently respond to any changes. We will provide you with periodic updates. Your participation in all our health and safety initiatives is vital to their success.

Lastly, the health of our staff is extremely important so please review the attached document developed by the Ohio Department of Health, *Establish Healthy Habits Now to Prevent Flu and Other Illness*.

# PANDEMIC PLANNING

## Establish Healthy Habits Now to Prevent Flu and Other Illness

### Practice Good Health Habits

If you are concerned about the news stories you've heard about a potential influenza pandemic, establishing good health habits now can help your body stay healthy and fight off the flu and other illness.

- Eat a balanced diet including plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grain products.
- Drink plenty of water and go easy on salt, sugar, alcohol and saturated fat.
- Exercise regularly. Thirty or more minutes of physical activity most days of the week can help boost your immunity.
- Get plenty of rest. Sleep is shown to help your body fight off illness.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread this way.
- Stay away from people who are sick as much as you can. If you must be around ill people, try to maintain a distance of at least three feet.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school.

### Wash Your Hands

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

#### Washing with soap and water:

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 20 seconds. This is about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice through.
- Rinse hands well under running water.

- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. Sharing cloth towels can spread germs. If possible, use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.

**Remember:** If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer to clean hands.

#### When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until dry.

#### When should you wash your hands?

- Before preparing or eating food.
- After going to the bathroom.
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has gone to the bathroom.
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- After handling an animal or animal waste.
- After handling garbage.
- Before and after treating a cut or wound.


#### Respiratory Etiquette

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
- Throw out used tissues in the trash as soon as you can.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue.
- If you cough or sneeze into your hand, wash your hands.
- If you are not near soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, rubbing hands until dry.

Get Informed • Be Prepared • Work Together

For more information visit <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov>

# Differences between seasonal flu and pandemic flu:



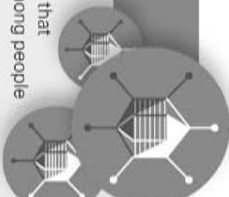
## Seasonal Flu

### THE VIRUS

- Caused by influenza viruses that are closely related to viruses that have previously circulated; most people will have some immunity to it.
- Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and muscle pain.
- Complications such as pneumonia are most common in the very young and very old and may result in death.
- Vaccine is produced each season to protect people from the three influenza strains predicted to be most likely to cause illness.

### IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

- Seasonal flu kills about 36,000 Americans each year and hospitalizes more than 200,000 children and adults.




## Mild to Moderate Pandemic

### THE VIRUS

- Caused by a new influenza virus that has not previously circulated among people and that can be easily spread.
- Because most people will have no immunity to the new virus, it will likely cause illness in high numbers of people and more severe illness and deaths than seasonal influenza.
- Symptoms are similar to seasonal flu, but may be more severe and have more frequent serious complications.
- Healthy adults may be at increased risk for serious complications.

### IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

- May cause a moderate impact on society (e.g., some short-term school closings, encouragement of people who are sick to stay home).



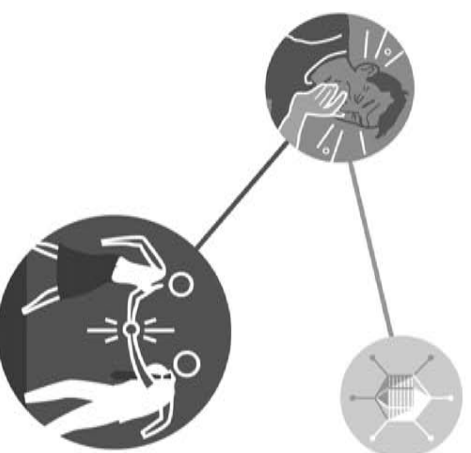
## Severe Pandemic

### THE VIRUS

- A severe strain causes more severe illness, results in greater loss of life, and has a greater impact on society.
- During the peak of a severe pandemic, workplace absenteeism could reach up to 40% due to people being ill themselves or caring for family members.

### IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

- Schools and day care/child care facilities may be closed.
- Public and social gatherings will be discouraged.
- The patterns of daily life could be changed for some time with basic services and access to supplies possibly disrupted.



## How does influenza spread?

Human influenza virus is mainly transmitted from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A lesser mode of transmission occurs when a person touches something that has the flu viruses on it and then touches his or her mouth or nose. Some individuals who are infected may never show symptoms or have mild symptoms, but could still spread the virus to others.

*When a pandemic begins, a virus-specific vaccine may not be available until 4-6 months after identification of a pandemic virus.*

The supply of antiviral drugs will likely be limited throughout the pandemic. Moreover, scientists cannot be certain that antiviral drugs will be effective against a pandemic virus. For these reasons, infection control and social distancing measures will be the keys to limiting transmission, delaying the spread of the virus, and protecting people. Social distancing is a measure to decrease the frequency of contact among people in order to diminish the risk of spread of communicable diseases.



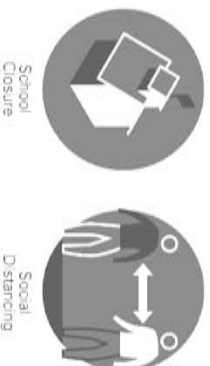


# Measures to limit the spread of the flu:

## Severe Pandemic:

All of the seasonal and mild to moderate flu methods plus:

- Possible extended school closure, which could range from weeks to up to 3 months. Presently, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Education, and other agencies are conducting a comprehensive review of school closure and its feasibility and effects in mitigating a severe pandemic. The results of this study will be shared in the coming months.
- Promote social distancing of children and teens outside the school setting by reducing their social circulation and contacts to the greatest extent possible. This could include canceling extracurricular activities.



## Mild to Moderate Pandemic:

All of the seasonal flu methods plus the following:

- Encourage the use of social distancing at the work place, at school and in the community.
- Possible school closure for a short amount of time (possibly days to a couple of weeks).
- Work with community flu-planning team to assess whether any additional measures should be taken.

Assess Measures



## Seasonal Flu:

- Promote hand washing and cough hygiene via school-wide campaigns and modeling by school staff.
- Encourage vaccination of staff and students for whom the flu vaccine is recommended.
- Persons developing symptoms at school should be sent home as soon as possible and instructed by appropriate officials not to return until they are well.



Encourage vaccination

Stay at home



## Infection control

The primary strategies for preventing spread of pandemic influenza:

- Persons with flu symptoms should:
- Stay at home;
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing;
- Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers frequently; and
- Try to maintain spatial separation of at least three feet from others if possible.

## Hand, Cough and Sneeze Hygiene

- When sneezing or coughing, cover the nose and mouth with a tissue or upper arm if a tissue is not available.
- Dispose of used tissues in a wastebasket and wash hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose.
- Use warm water and soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizers to clean hands.
- Wash hands before eating or touching eyes, nose, or mouth.



## Social distancing

In a pandemic, the risk of getting the flu is greatest when one has close contact with an infected person. Social distancing measures such as school closure, telecommuting or staggered shifts for the workforce, and cancellation of public gatherings may be effective in reducing transmission risks.



This information can be viewed at <http://www.ed.gov>



## Surveillance and Reporting

Schools are provided with the following information to monitor the illness rate and potential epidemic:

1. Common influenza-like illness symptoms.
2. Basic surveillance instructions.
3. Report form to submit to your local health department. (Please contact the local health department in your school district as they may have individualized a form for your use.)

### Common Flu Symptoms

During all stages of a pandemic flu outbreak, it will be essential to monitor and document the number of students and staff who are absent with influenza-like illness. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), influenza symptoms usually start suddenly and may include the following:

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Diarrhea and vomiting (more common among children than adults)

Keeping track of the number of students and staff who are absent with influenza-like illness will help public health officials determine when and whether to close schools, whether to declare an epidemic, and whether the epidemic is increasing in scope.

### Surveillance Instructions

A student with influenza-like illness symptoms must be evaluated for fever. If a student has a temperature of 100.0 F or greater and is experiencing influenza-like illness symptoms (as described above), he/she should be excluded from school until free of symptoms. Please note that not all symptoms are present in all persons; however, gastrointestinal (stomach) upsets without the above symptoms should not be considered influenza.



# School Influenza Outbreak Report

School year
-------------

**This form is to be completed and mailed immediately when normal absenteeism is being exceeded due to suspected influenza outbreak and followed with updates.**

Report date / /	
District/School name	
Contact person	Phone number ( )
City	County

Number of schools buildings in your school district . . . . .

Number of schools affected by this influenza outbreak . . . . .

Total enrollment of district (approx.) . . . . .

Total enrollment of schools affected by outbreak (approx.) . . . . .

**The date on which this outbreak apparently began**     /     /    

	Date	# Normally Absent	# Absent this Outbreak
Day one of outbreak	/ /		
Day two of outbreak	/ /		
Day three of outbreak	/ /		
Day four of outbreak	/ /		
Day five of outbreak	/ /		

Please list the major symptoms being reported by students or staff:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Please check below the grade level most affected by the influenza outbreak:

- ☐ Preschool   
 ☐ Elementary   
 ☐ Mid-School   
 ☐ Sr. High   
 ☐ Staff

Please send this Outbreak Report to:     YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# Daily School Absentee Log

School	Date
--------	------

Use this form (or an equivalent) to log student absences to assist you with influenza surveillance in the event of higher than normal absenteeism.

[illegible]





## INFLUENZA (FLU)

### FACT SHEET

# Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

## How Germs Spread

The main way that illnesses like colds and flu are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This is called "droplet spread."

This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Sometimes germs also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.

## How to Stop the Spread of Germs

In a nutshell: take care to

- Cover your mouth and nose
- Clean your hands often
- Remind your children to practice healthy habits, too

## Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

## The "Happy Birthday" song helps keep your hands clean?

Not exactly. Yet we recommend that when you wash your hands—with soap and warm water—that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. That's about the same time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice!

## Alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers work too

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.\*

\* Source: FDA/CFSAN Food Safety A to Z Reference Guide, September 2001: [Handwashing](#).

## Germs and Children

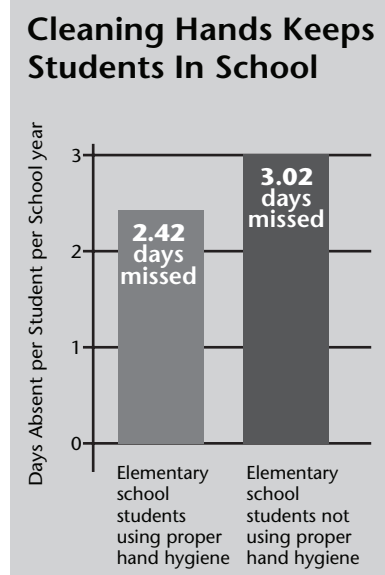
Remind children to practice healthy habits too, because germs spread, especially at school.

## Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

(continued from previous page)

The flu has caused high rates of absenteeism among students and staff in our country's 119,000 schools. Influenza is not the only respiratory infection of concern in schools — nearly 22 million school days are lost each year to the common cold alone. However, when children practice healthy habits, they miss fewer days of school.

School administrators, teachers and staff: See [Preventing the Spread of Influenza \(the Flu\) in Schools](#) for CDC interim guidance.



Source: Am J Infect Control 2000;28:340-6.

### More Facts, Figures, and How-Tos

CDC and its partner agencies and organizations offer a great deal of information about handwashing and other things you can do to stop the germs that cause flu, the common cold, and other illnesses. See [Other Resources](#) and [Posters](#) on this [Stop the Spread of Germs](#) site for a select listing of Web sites, materials, and contact information.

## Stop the Spread of Germs in Schools

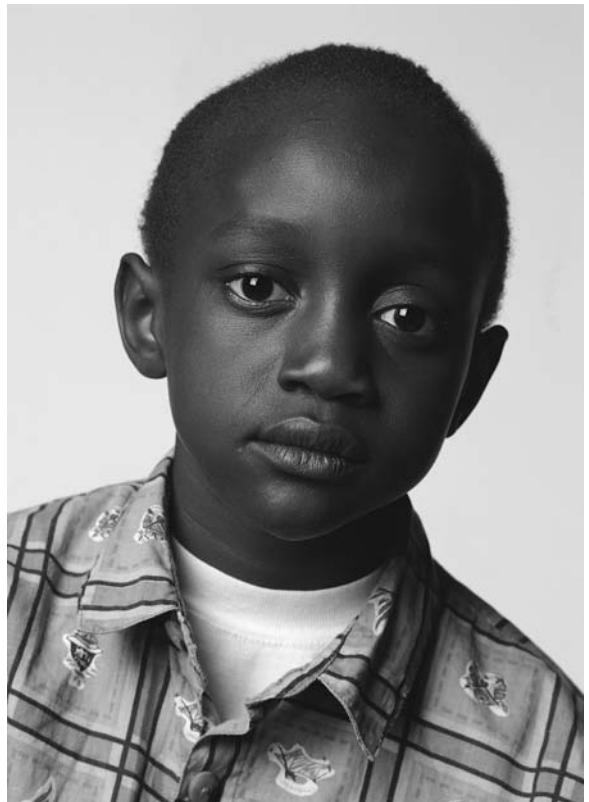
### Fast Facts

- Approximately 1/5 of the U.S. population attends or works in schools. (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).
- Some viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes up to 2 hours or more on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. (Ansari, 1988; Scott and Bloomfield, 1989)
- Nearly 22 million school days are lost annually due to the common cold alone. (CDC, 1996)
- Addressing the spread of germs in schools is essential to the health of our youth, our schools, and our nation.
- Students need to get plenty of sleep and physical activity, drink water, and eat good food to help them stay healthy in the winter and all year.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu), or call the CDC Flu Information Line at (800) CDC-INFO.

## Infection Control in the School: Protecting Students and Teachers

1. Encourage staff and students to wash their hands using soap and water before eating and after using the toilet. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Teach students to wash their hands for 15 to 20 seconds, long enough to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.
3. Ensure that sink locations and restrooms are stocked with soap and paper towels or working hand dryer.
4. Encourage students and staff to use a paper towel to open restroom doors after washing their hands. Place a garbage can near the restroom exit to facilitate ease of paper towel disposal.
5. Clean frequently touched surfaces and shared items daily using an approved tuberculocidal agent that kills hepatitis B virus or a chlorine (bleach) and water solution of 1:10 parts. Keep cleaning supplies out of reach of children.
6. Encourage parents of ill students to keep their children home.
7. Encourage ill staff to stay home. Establish non-punitive sick leave policies during a pandemic.
8. Encourage staff and students to cover their coughs and sneezes using tissues or shirt sleeves, not their hands. Have waste cans for immediate disposal of tissues and encourage hand washing with soap and water.
9. Educate parents about respiratory etiquette and hand washing at home and their importance in disease prevention. Encourage parents to model the desired behavior for their children.





## Infection Control in the School: Caring for Ill Students

In schools, infection control for pandemic influenza should focus on keeping sick students away from school while they are infectious and promoting good respiratory and hand hygiene. Students may come down with pandemic influenza-like symptoms while at school. There may be a need to temporarily isolate ill students before sending them home to prevent the spread of disease.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Each school should use existing student sickness surveillance procedures or establish procedures for identifying and reporting students with influenza-like illness.
2. Develop emergency contact procedures to notify the ill student's parents or guardians and arrange to have the student sent home as soon as possible.
3. Consider designating a school bus for transporting ill students if parents or guardians are unavailable.
4. Establish procedures for sending ill students to a local hospital/clinic for diagnosis and treatment if necessary.
5. Establish procedures to minimize the spread of disease and to protect students and teachers from getting ill:
  - a. Discourage students from sharing food or utensils.
  - b. Encourage all students and staff to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating and before touching their eyes, noses or mouths.
  - c. Advise students and staff to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing, coughing or blowing their nose. It is important that they place used tissues in the trash and immediately wash their hands.
  - d. Teach students and staff to cough or sneeze into their elbow or upper sleeve.
  - e. Advise all students and staff to stay home if they are sick.
  - f. Remind all staff to maintain good hand washing and infection control practices at all times.
  - g. Consider the need for extra supplies such as alcohol-based hand sanitizers, hand-washing soap, paper towels and tissues during the peak of flu season and during a pandemic.

## Influenza and Students with Special Needs

Flu can infect anyone. Few people will have any immunity to a pandemic flu, so it is likely to spread rapidly. Children are two to three times more likely than adults to get sick with the seasonal flu, and children frequently spread the virus to others. Because schools are an excellent place for flu viruses to attack and spread, families with school-age children have more infections than other families, with an average of one-third of the family members infected each year.

Some individuals are categorized as high risk of developing medical complications due to influenza. High risk does not mean those persons are more likely to contract a case of influenza. It means that if they do have a case of influenza, then they are more likely to have an adverse health outcome (e.g., outpatient visit, hospitalization) than those considered non-high risk. Young children, people of all ages with heart, lung (including asthma) and kidney conditions and people over 65 are more likely to have complications from flu that can lead to pneumonia, hospitalizations and even death. Although many of the pandemic flu issues relevant to adults also are relevant to children, those caring for children should be aware of the unique needs of that population.

It is important that parents of young children and children with special health care needs consult their child's health care provider to discuss whether their child should receive a yearly influenza vaccine. Although the seasonal influenza vaccine most likely will not provide immunity to a pandemic virus, it will provide protection from seasonal flu.

### **Potential complications from influenza include:**

- Bacterial pneumonia
- Dehydration
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes
- Death

Families who have children with special health care needs may need to make extra preparations and take extra precautions during a pandemic influenza outbreak.

### **Preparation before a Pandemic**

Families of children with a chronic illness such as diabetes or asthma should ensure children continue to take medications as prescribed. In a severe pandemic, the delivery of supplies may be disrupted; families should talk to the child's health insurer to see whether extra medication can be stockpiled as part of pandemic influenza preparation. Families should also be sure to have necessary medical supplies such as glucose monitoring equipment for diabetic persons.

Families of children who receive ongoing medical care such as dialysis, chemotherapy or other therapies, should talk with their health care providers about plans to continue care during a pandemic. Families should know the location and availability of more than one facility if they have a family member who is dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.

Families of children who have special dietary needs should take special precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply. Remember, in a severe pandemic, persons may be asked to limit their time in public which may result in disruptions of important services such as the food supply.

An additional list of supplies that families of children with disabilities should consider preparing before the onset of pandemic influenza:

- A list of medications including dosage and time(s) of administration.
- A list of allergies.
- Extra health supplies as needed including eyeglasses, hearing-aid batteries, wheelchair batteries and oxygen.
- A list of the style and serial number of all medical devices.
- Medical insurance and Medicare cards.
- List of contact numbers for doctors, relatives or friends who should be notified in an emergency.

For families that include a service animal, it is important to prepare to support that animal during a pandemic influenza outbreak. Families should create a comprehensive “ready kit” with supplies necessary to sustain the service animal for a week or more. Visit <http://www.nod.org/emergency>.

### During a Pandemic

During a severe pandemic influenza outbreak, medical facilities may become overwhelmed by the number of ill individuals. Because children with special health care needs are at high risk of complications from influenza, families should contact their health care provider right away if their child has any symptoms of influenza. Families should be encouraged to ask their health care provider what symptoms would indicate the need to seek immediate medical attention prior to an actual emergency.

### Additional Concerns

In addition to students with special health care needs, your school may serve families with other special needs who may require extra assistance during a pandemic event including:

#### Low-income students who depend on school-served meals

- Inform families of resources to obtain food and other household supplies during a flu pandemic.

#### Students and families who do not speak English as their primary language

- Take a survey of the different languages spoken by students at each school.
- If possible, have translators translate the school or district’s pandemic influenza preparedness plan.
- Internet resources for pandemic influenza related information available in different languages are available for download online:
  - United Kingdom Department of Health, Family-oriented pandemic flu information in 21 different languages:  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT\\_ID=4121631&chk=vR4A92](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4121631&chk=vR4A92)
  - US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Avian flu information in different languages:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian>





## Protecting Special Needs Populations During a Pandemic

During a pandemic, supply chains may break down, access to outpatient medical treatments may be limited and hospitals likely will reach full capacity quickly. For Ohioans with physical, medical or mental disabilities, emergencies present unique challenges.

### SPECIAL NEEDS PLANNING FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations working with special needs populations should plan now to continue providing supplies and services during a pandemic. Protecting vulnerable special needs populations during a pandemic requires careful planning.

A first step in planning for special needs populations during a pandemic is to identify those who may receive services or supplies through your organization.

People with disabilities have differing capabilities and no one individual or organization can represent the needs of all people with special needs. That's why it is important to carefully identify the special needs populations your organization may serve.

Second, work with local disability organizations to identify clusters of people with disabilities. For example, does your organization serve a school with a large population of disabled students, a senior housing development or an apartment complex with large numbers of residents with disabilities? Identifying clusters will streamline the planning process.

Finally, prepare a voluntary special needs registry if you do not yet have one for your organization. A registry is a listing of people who meet specified criteria who may need assistance during a potential pandemic.

A registry can be used in two ways. The first is to survey the needs of the individuals listed in the registry. The second is to use it to alert people with disabilities of an emergency and assist officials in providing emergency services.

A registry for your organization can be shared with local authorities to assist in evacuation and other emergencies services should the need arise. Businesses may be aware of special needs of employees, but nonprofit and faith-based organizations may need to do more work to identify special needs people they work with.

When developing a special needs registry your organization should consider:

- Do you have a plan to keep the registry up to date? An out-of-date registry may be a hindrance if people no longer live or work where the registry says they do.
- What will be the criteria for inclusion in the registry? Consider the criteria and who will make eligibility determinations.
- What safeguards will be in place to protect registrants' privacy? Some people may not wish to be identified as having a disability. Guidelines should be developed to determine when and with whom the information can be shared.

Developing a special needs registry specific to the disabled people your organization serves can be helpful to identify gaps in resources and planning.

### SPECIAL NEEDS PLANNING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Individual preparedness can also help keep people with disabilities safe during an emergency. Planning ahead provides the best protection when disaster strikes.

## T h e O h i o D e p a r t m e n t o f H e a l t h

First, create a personal support network, or if you know someone who has special needs, offer to be a part of their network. A personal support network can be made of trusted people who can provide assistance if needed. If you know someone with special needs, ask what you can do to help them through an emergency. It is important to not count on just one support person. Try to include a minimum of three people for each location where you regularly spend a lot of time such as home, school or work.

Second, complete a personal assessment. Make a list of personal needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. For planning purposes, it's best to base your plan on your lowest anticipated level of functioning.

Use the following questions to help you or someone you know complete a personal assessment:

### Daily Living

- Personal Care – Do you need assistance with personal care or use adaptive equipment to help you get dressed?
- Personal Care Equipment – Do you require a shower chair, tub-transfer bench or other equipment?
- Adaptive Feeding Devices – Do you require special utensils to help you prepare or eat food independently?
- Medications – Do you have a listing and supply of all medications?
- Electricity-dependent Equipment – Do you have a safe backup power supply for equipment that runs on electricity? How long will it last?

### Getting Around

- Disaster Debris – How will you cope with debris in your home or along planned escape routes?
- Transportation – Do you need a specially equipped vehicle or accessible transportation?
- Errands – Do you have extra groceries, medication and medical supplies if your caregiver is unable to reach you?

### Evacuating

- Building Evacuation – Will you need help to evacuate your home or office?

- Building Exits – Are there alternate exits such as stairs, windows or ramps you can use if elevators are shut down in an emergency?
- Getting Help – How will you summon help if fire alarms with sprinklers ruin your electronic devices?
- Mobility Aids/Ramp Access – What can you do if you can't find your mobility aids? What will you do if your ramps are shaken loose or become separated from the building?
- Service Animals/Pets – Will you be able to care for your animal? Do you have someone designated to care for your animal should you be unable to? Do you have appropriate licenses for your service animal so you will be permitted to keep it with you or choose to use an emergency public shelter?

The following are a few more items to consider before a disaster: store backup equipment at your neighbor's home, school or workplace; have a manual wheelchair if you use an electric scooter; transferring methods; teach those who may assist you to operate necessary equipment and if you are vision impaired, deaf or hard of hearing; plan ahead for someone to convey emergency information if you are unable to use TV or radio.

Be sure to discuss emergency plans with family, friends, personal care attendants and anyone else in your support network.

### GET PREPARED

Representatives from the Ohio departments of Aging, Health and Job & Family Services are working together on a special needs workgroup as part of the Ohio Department of Health's Pandemic Flu Planning Task Force. If you have information you would like to share with this work group contact James Bryant, M.D. at [james.bryant@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:james.bryant@odh.ohio.gov).

To begin preparing, more information is available on the National Organization on Disability Web site <http://www.nod.org/> and the American Red Cross Web site <http://www.redcross.org/>.

Portions of this article were taken from the National Organization on Disability and the American Red Cross Web sites.

November 2006

Get Informed \* Be Prepared \* Work Together

For more information visit <http://www.ohio.pandemicflu.gov>

According to the Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention (CDC)

# HAND WASHING

is the single most important action  
that one can take to  
**prevent the onset of illness.**

**Wash your hands frequently, especially after  
using the bathroom and before eating or drinking.**

- 1. Wash hands under warm running water.**
- 2. Apply soap and lather well for 15-20 seconds.  
Time yourself.**
- 3. Rinse.**
- 4. Use a paper towel to turn off the water and  
open the door.**





## Mental Health Considerations

Any emergency situation such as pandemic influenza will have mental health effects on students, families and school staff. In dealing with the stressors of a pandemic, mental health professionals have two goals: to shape adaptive behaviors and to reduce social and emotional deterioration. Schools are critical social institutions where the physical and emotional safety of students, families and staff are paramount and are institutions with established means of communication with a large segment of the population. Schools can use these established communication channels to promote healthy habits and inform families about critical pandemic information.

### Planning and Preparation

Preparing for and responding to emotional and psychological needs of students, staff and families is a critical component of pandemic planning. Although it is impossible to prevent emotional responses to the crisis, it is possible to help people prepare for it and provide counseling and resources to those in need.

Unlike many disasters, a pandemic will be a long-term event affecting large portions of the population at once. Below are psychosocial issues that need to be addressed when preparing for an influenza pandemic:

- Illness/death among colleagues and family members.
- Fear of contagion/transmitting disease to others.
- Sense of ineffectiveness and powerlessness.
- Prolonged separation from family/concern about children.
- Constant stress and pressure to keep performing.
- Domestic pressures caused by school closures, day care disruptions, family illness.
- Concerns about receiving vaccines and/or antiviral drugs.

Psychosocial support services should be incorporated into emergency preparedness and pandemic planning. The importance of communication before, during and after a pandemic cannot be overemphasized. Planning for the provision of psychosocial support services might include the following activities:

- Ensure administrators encourage use of tools and techniques for supporting students, families and staff during the crisis.
- Train mental health staff in behavioral techniques to help students and staff cope with emotions during the crisis.
- Identify additional resources such as community-based organization and non-governmental organizations which are available to students, families and staff during and after the pandemic.
- Develop strategies to assist staff with child/elder-care responsibilities or other special needs that might prevent them from working during the pandemic.

### During and After the Pandemic

During and following a crisis, commonly experienced emotions include:

- Fear
- Panic
- Confusion
- Exhaustion
- Grief and loss
- Depression

Families may also experience reactions to loss of income, lack of medical assistance, loss of physical health, loss of routine and fear of the unknown. These issues may be exacerbated by:

- Lack of accurate information, rumors, misconceptions or conspiracy theories.
- Loss of faith in health institutions, employers or the government.
- Death of leaders in the response effort.

- Belief that medical resources and restrictions on civil liberties are unfairly distributed.
- Economic collapse or shortages of food, water or other essential services.
- Inability to perform rituals in response to massive fatalities.

During and after a pandemic, communication with students, families and staff will remain important. Schools can reinforce:

### **Health protective behaviors**

People should be encouraged to take care of their own health by getting enough rest, continuing to take prescribed medications and by limiting potentially harmful behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol and taking recreational drugs.

### **Risk communication**

Continue to emphasize ways to avoid becoming ill.

### **Safety communication**

Promote simple, clear, easy-to-do measures that will protect individuals and their families.

### **Education**

Educating students, families and staff informs, prepares and enlists them as public health partners.

### **Community-directed efforts**

Organizing communal needs and working toward tangible goals helps foster community resiliency.

### **Evidence-based principles of psychological first aid:**

- Establish safe areas and behaviors.
- Maximize self-care abilities.
- Teach calming skills.
- Facilitate family connectedness.
- Encourage maintenance of natural body rhythms.
- Foster hope and optimism while not denying risk.

### **Care for first responders**

This may require assistance to ensure the safety of their families to enable them to continue to function.

### **Mental health surveillance**

During and after the pandemic, populations should be observed for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, substance abuse, as well as for loss of critical structure to sustain community function.

## Mental Health Tips

Everyone will have different reactions to and different ways of coping with difficult events in their lives. Some individuals may need extra support or even professional help. Long-term mental/behavioral health effects may be seen for months and even years after we experience a pandemic.

### Possible Mental Health Symptoms

Some signs that additional help may be necessary include:

- Difficulty communicating thoughts
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty maintaining balance
- Easily frustrated
- Increased use of drugs/alcohol
- Limited attention span
- Poor work performance
- Headaches/stomach problems
- Tunnel vision/muffled hearing
- Disorientation or confusion
- Feeling of hopelessness, depression, sadness

- Mood swings
- Overwhelming guilt and self-doubt
- Fears of crowds, strangers or being alone
- Impulse control problems
- Worsening of prior behavioral health symptoms
- Domestic violence

### How to Cope with Feelings

- Even though it may be difficult, talk with someone about your anger, sorrow and other emotions.
- Promote your own physical and emotional healing by staying active in your daily life patterns or by adjusting them. This healthy outlook will help you and your family.
- Maintain a normal routine, limiting demanding responsibilities of yourself and your family.
- If your daily activities do have to change, explore ways to stay active in alternative ways.
- Stay connected with family and friends.
- Participate in memorials, rituals and other symbols as a way to express feelings and maintain feelings of normalcy.
- Use existing supports including family, friends, church and co-workers.
- Establish a family emergency plan. You may be comforted by your feeling that there is something that you can accomplish.
- Be aware of and limit the amount of television coverage you and your family watch.
- Get assistance from a counselor or other behavioral health professional if the warning signs are serious or persist.





# Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist for Individuals & Families



You can prepare for an influenza pandemic now. You should know both the magnitude of what can happen during a pandemic outbreak and what actions you can take to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. This checklist will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

## ***1. To plan for a pandemic:***

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- ☐ Store a two week supply of water and food. During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.
- ☐ Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- ☐ Have nonprescription 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 would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.
- ☐ Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency response.
- ☐ Get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic.

## ***2. To limit the spread of germs and prevent infection:***

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- ☐ Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water, and model the current behavior.
- ☐ Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, and be sure to model that behavior.
- ☐ Teach your children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick. Stay home from work and school if sick.





### 3. Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:

Examples of food and non-perishables	Examples of medical, health, and emergency supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, and soups</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Protein or fruit bars</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dry cereal or granola</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter or nuts</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dried Fruit</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Crackers</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Canned juices</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Bottled water</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Canned or jarred baby food and formula</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Pet food</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Other nonperishable foods</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Soap and water, or alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Anti-diarrheal medication</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Fluids with electrolytes</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cleansing agent/soap</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Batteries</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Portable radio</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Manual can opener</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Garbage bags</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers</li></ul>

**PandemicFlu.gov**



**AvianFlu.gov**

## Sample Newsletter #2: First bird case

*Use this newsletter to help prepare parents for pandemic influenza after the first bird case is found in the United States. Even though the confirmation of a bird infected with bird/avian influenza in the United States does not signal a pandemic, there will be confusion and concern when this happens.*

As expected, birds sick with the H5N1 bird/avian flu virus are now in the United States. It is important to know that, at this time, there are no known human cases of bird/avian flu in the United States.

However, health officials are worried that the bird/avian influenza virus may change so that people can get sick from it. If that happened, it could spread from person-to-person. This would cause a worldwide flu outbreak, called a pandemic.

So, even though there is no flu pandemic now, we want to remind you about some ways to protect your family from getting sick:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Do not send them to school. Contact your health care provider for medical advice.
- Encourage your children to wash their hands frequently, especially before eating, after going to the bathroom and after playing outdoors.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into their elbow or upper sleeve. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are better.
- Do not touch sick or dead birds.



We have enclosed a copy of How to Talk to Kids About Bird Flu developed by the Ohio Department of Health. If you would like more information on bird flu, please visit <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov>. We hope this information will be helpful as you prepare to keep your family safe and healthy.



Children may hear about bird flu at school or on TV and may have questions. As parents, caregivers and trusted grown-ups, adults may be in the best position to talk to children frankly about the situation while helping to calm their fears. This guide is designed to help you speak to children honestly without provoking undue fear or concern.

#### How to explain bird flu to kids

- Bird flu is a sickness of poultry (chickens) and waterfowl (i.e., geese, ducks) and has not yet been found in birds in the United States.
- The bird flu rarely passes from birds to people, but it is spreading very quickly from birds to other birds at this time.
- Right now, only birds and people who have very close contact with birds can get bird flu.
- Scientists are unsure if you can catch the virus from other animals like cats.
- Close contact includes coming into contact with a sick bird's respiratory secretions (snot), saliva (spit) or feces (poop) or any surface that has been contaminated with these substances.

#### Why is there so much talk about bird flu?

- If the flu virus mutates (changes) and begins easily infecting people then a pandemic may begin.
- A pandemic is a sickness that occurs all over the world.
- The flu that we can get every year is called seasonal flu and most kids just have to stay home from school for a few days to get better.
- A pandemic flu virus is a new virus that people haven't gotten before.
- If people haven't gotten sick before, then they don't have immunity. Immunity is a build up of resistance to sickness.

## What to tell kids about bird flu

- Without immunity we can become very sick and that is why everyone is so concerned about bird flu. If bird flu starts passing from person to person, then it will be a hard disease for people's bodies to fight.

#### What can I do to stay safe?

- In general, birds carry a lot of diseases besides bird flu, so it is always a good idea to wash your hands after being around birds. Don't rub your eyes or touch your nose or mouth while handling birds.
- If you have a pet bird, make sure to keep your pet and its food and water inside, away from a place where they could be exposed to any infected birds. Make sure to keep your bird cage clean and wash your hands after playing with or petting your bird.
- If the bird flu comes to the United States, here is when to find a grown-up:
  - If you are around a lot of birds.
  - If you step in bird poop, ask a grown-up to help you wash your shoes.
  - Don't try to help a bird that looks sick or touch a dead bird; find a grown-up.

#### How to stay healthy all the time

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after you use it.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth; germs often spread this way.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze or use the restroom and before eating. If you are not near soap and water, use hand sanitizer.
- Stay away as much as you can from people who are sick.
- If you get sick, stay home from school.

## Sample Newsletter #3: Increased illness/pandemic flu outbreak\*

*Use this newsletter to let parents know schools will remain open.*

**\*Please note that you will need to coordinate all your family and community education efforts with your local health department once a pandemic flu outbreak has been identified to ensure that you are providing appropriate information.**

Every year, some people get sick with the flu during the fall and winter months. This year, there is a new flu virus that is making many people in our country sick. So many people are sick in the world that health officials call it a “pandemic flu.” At this time our school is experiencing increased absenteeism.

We are working closely with our local health department to determine how our schools can best protect the health and safety of our students and staff. At this time schools will remain open. We will keep you updated with any important information.

To keep the flu from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children home. Any children who are sick in school will be sent home.

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against pandemic flu. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into their elbow or upper sleeve. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and stay away from other people until they are better.
- Stay away from shopping malls, movie theaters or other places where there are large groups of people.

We are also enclosing information for you and your family, *Influenza Symptoms, Protection and What To Do If You Get Sick*.







## INFLUENZA (FLU)

### FACT SHEET

## Influenza Symptoms, Protection, and What to Do If You Get Sick

Influenza (commonly called the “flu”) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. The information below describes common flu symptoms, how to protect yourself and those close to you from getting the flu, and what to do if you get sick with flu-like symptoms.

### People May Have Different Reactions to the Flu

The flu can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death. Although most healthy people recover from the flu without complications, some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious complications from the flu.

### Be Aware of Common Flu Symptoms

Influenza usually starts suddenly and may include the following symptoms:

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Diarrhea and vomiting (more common among children than adults)

Having these symptoms does not always mean that you have the flu. Many different illnesses, including the common cold, can have similar symptoms.

### Know the Risks from the Flu

In some people, the flu can cause serious complications, including bacterial pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Children and adults may develop sinus problems and ear infections.

### Know How the Flu Spreads

The flu usually spreads from person to person in respiratory droplets when people who are infected cough or sneeze. People occasionally may become infected by touching something with influenza virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.

Healthy adults may be able to infect others 1 day before getting symptoms and up to 5 days after getting sick. Therefore, it is possible to give someone the flu before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick.

### Protection against the Flu

The single best way to protect yourself and others against influenza is to get a flu vaccination each year. Two kinds of flu vaccine are available in the United States:

- The “flu shot”—an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.
- The nasal-spray flu vaccine—a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for “live attenuated influenza vaccine”). LAIV is approved for use in healthy people 5 years to 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

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## **Influenza Symptoms, Protection, and What to Do If You Get Sick**

(continued from previous page)

October or November is the best time to get vaccinated, but you can still get vaccinated in December and later. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as springtime.

The following additional measures can help protect against the flu.

### ***Habits for Good Health***

These steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as the flu:

- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze—throw the tissue away after you use it.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- **If you get the flu, stay home from work**, school, and social gatherings. In this way you will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- **Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs often spread this way.

### ***Antiviral Medications***

Three antiviral drugs (amantadine, rimantadine, and oseltamivir)

(<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/antiviral/index.htm>) are approved for use in preventing the flu. These are prescription medications, and a doctor should be consulted before they are used. During the 2005-2006 influenza season, CDC recommends against the use of amantadine or rimantadine for the treatment or prophylaxis of influenza in the United States. For details, see the January 14, 2006 CDC Health Alert Notice (HAN): [www.cdc.gov/flu/han011406.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/han011406.htm).

## **What to Do If You Get Sick**

### ***Diagnosing the Flu***

It is very difficult to distinguish the flu from other infections on the basis of symptoms alone. A doctor's exam may be needed to tell whether you have developed the flu or a complication of the flu. There are tests that can determine if you have the flu as long as you are tested within the first 2 or 3 days of illness.

If you develop flu-like symptoms and are concerned about your illness, especially if you are at high risk for complications of the flu, you should consult your health-care provider. Those at high risk for complications include **people 65 years or older, people with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, and young children.**

### ***Antiviral Medications***

Your doctor may recommend use of an antiviral medication

(<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/antiviral/index.htm>) to help treat the flu. Four antiviral drugs (amantadine, rimantadine, zanamavir, and oseltamivir) are approved for treatment of the flu. During the 2005-2006 influenza season, CDC recommends against the use of amantadine or rimantadine for the treatment or prophylaxis of influenza in the United States. (For details, see the January 14, 2006 CDC Health Alert Notice [HAN]: [www.cdc.gov/flu/han011406.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/han011406.htm).) These are prescription medications, and a doctor should be consulted before the drugs are used. Antiviral treatment lasts for 5 days and must be started within 2 days of illness. Therefore, if you get flu-like symptoms, seek medical care early.

### ***Other Ways to Respond to the Flu***

If you get the flu, get plenty of rest, drink a lot of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco. Also, you can take medications such as acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®) to relieve the fever and muscle aches associated with the flu. Never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever.

For more information, [visit www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu),  
or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6358 (TTY).

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## Sample Newsletter #4: Expanded disease outbreak\*

*Use this newsletter to let parents know schools are open and urge ill children to stay home.*

**\*Please note that you will need to coordinate all your family and community education efforts with your local health department once a pandemic flu outbreak has been identified to ensure that you are providing appropriate information.**

You received a recent newsletter to tell you about a pandemic flu outbreak in our county. Here is some new information.

We continue to have reports of students in our school who are ill with this flu virus. We will continue to work with \_\_\_\_\_ health department to determine if and when our schools should close. As of the printing of this letter, schools remain open. We will keep you updated with any important information.

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against pandemic flu. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness and take care of your family:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- If some of the people in your home are sick with the flu, keep them away from the people who are not sick.
- If some of the people in your home are sick with the flu and you cannot see a health provider, some things you can do to help them are:
  - Have them drink a lot of liquids (juice, water).
  - Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
  - For fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®) as indicated on the label or by a health care provider. Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
  - Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.
  - Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently.
  - Contact a health care provider for further advice. If the ill person is having difficulty breathing or is getting worse, contact the health care provider right away.

If the pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, schools may close for days or weeks. The purpose of closing schools will be to keep children from getting sick. If schools are closed, children should stay home. We have enclosed *Tips for Parents on Coping with Pandemic Flu* to help you continue planning for the needs of your family.

## Coping with Pandemic Influenza: Tips for Parents

### Plan for an extended stay at home during a influenza pandemic.

- Ask your employer about how business will continue during a pandemic.
- Ask your employer if you can work from home during a flu pandemic.
- Plan for a possible reduction or loss of income, if you are unable to work or your place of employment is closed.
- Check with your employer or union about leave policies.
- Plan home learning activities and exercises. Have materials such as books on hand.
- Plan recreational activities that your children can do at home.

### Suggested items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:

#### Non-perishable foods

- ~ Ready-to-eat canned meats fruits, vegetables, soups
- ~ Protein or fruit bars
- ~ Dry cereal or granola
- ~ Peanut butter and jelly
- ~ Dried fruit, nuts, trail mix
- ~ Crackers
- ~ Canned juices
- ~ Bottled water
- ~ Canned or jarred baby food
- ~ Baby formula
- ~ Pet food
- ~ Garbage bags

#### Health and emergency supplies

- ~ Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring
- ~ Soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- ~ Medicines for fever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin®)
- ~ Thermometer
- ~ Vitamins
- ~ Fluids with electrolytes such as Pedialyte or sport drinks
- ~ Flashlight with extra batteries
- ~ Portable radio with extra batteries
- ~ Manual can opener
- ~ Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diaper

### If someone in your home develops flu symptoms (fever, cough, muscle aches):

- Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids.
- Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For individuals with fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin™) or acetaminophen (Tylenol™) as indicated on the label or by a health care provider.
- Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers: it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Sponging with tepid (wrist-temperature) water lowers fever only during the period of sponging. Do not sponge with alcohol.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag for their disposal within reach of the patient.
- All members of the household should wash their hands frequently.
- Keep other family members and visitors away from the person who is ill.

***Remember to contact a health care provider for advice. If the ill person is having difficulty breathing or is getting worse, contact the health care provider immediately.***

For more information, contact your health care provider or Ohio Department of Health's pandemic flu web site:

<http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov>



## Sample Newsletter #5: School closure

*This information may be helpful as you develop a letter to inform parents that schools are closed. Please work with your local health department to ensure that your message is consistent with community guidance.*

**\*Please note that you will need to coordinate all your family and community education efforts with your local health department once a pandemic flu outbreak has been identified to ensure that you are providing appropriate information.**

We have been working closely with our local health officials and at this time we have decided to close all schools in our area because of the pandemic flu situation. All schools are immediately closed until further notice and children should stay home.

Schools may be closed for days or even weeks to reduce the contact among children and stop the spread of the flu.

We know many students and their families are very sick. We know this is a hard time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill.

Because the flu is easily spread from person to person, it is not safe for large groups of people to gather. During this time, both children and adults should stay away from other people and groups as much as possible. They should not gather in other locations such as shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.

We know it may be hard to get a doctor's appointment, go to a clinic or even be seen in a hospital emergency room. Here are some tips for helping those who are sick with the flu:

- Have them drink a lot of liquids (juice, water).
- Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®) as indicated on the label or by a health care provider. **Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers;** it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.
- Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently.
- Keep the people who are sick with the flu away from the people who are not sick.

For more information, call your health care provider.

We will contact you as soon as we have information about when school will reopen.



## Sample Newsletter #6: School re-opens

*Use this newsletter to inform parents schools are re-opened.*

**\*Please note that you will need to coordinate all your family and community education efforts with your local health department once a pandemic flu outbreak has been identified to ensure that you are providing appropriate information.**

Local health officials have declared the pandemic flu is under control. Our school will open again on \_\_\_\_\_.  
At this time, students may safely return to class.

Even though school is opening, there are still some people who are sick from the flu virus. Health officials say pandemic flu outbreaks sometimes happen in waves. This means more people could become sick again. If more people get sick, schools may need to close again. We will continue to give you any important information.

Because the flu can still be spread from person to person, please keep children who are sick at home. Please do not send them to school.

We are looking forward to seeing your children again.



## Sample News Release A—School Open

*Schools may choose to use this type of news release to announce schools will remain open.*

For release (date)

Contact: (contact name and number)

### Parents Urged To Plan For Possible School Closures

School District urges parents to prepare for possible school closures as the influenza pandemic continues to spread.

At this time, we are open and our thoughts are with all families and children who are affected. It is important that parents begin planning now for child care in their homes in the event we close our school.

School and health officials are working together and will update parents with important information as it becomes available.

If the pandemic continues to spread and more Ohioans become ill, health officials say they may need to order schools closed for a period of time.

There are steps residents can take to protect themselves and their loved ones against all respiratory illnesses, including pandemic flu.

- Wash your hands thoroughly and often using soap and warm water, rubbing your hands together for at least 20 seconds. If you are not near soap and water, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, rubbing hands until dry.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, upper sleeve or a tissue. Throw the tissue away after you use it.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth; germs often spread this way.
- Stay away as much as you can from people who are sick.
- If you get sick, stay home from work, school and day care.
- Take care of your overall health by getting enough rest, eating plenty of fruits and vegetables and getting 30 or more minutes of physical activity most days of the week.

Health officials point out recommendations may change during the course of a flu pandemic. For school updates, parents can call the school district's information line at (Insert Number).

For more information, visit the State of Ohio's pandemic flu Web site at <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov>.

## Sample Statements for School Officials — Schools Open

### Outbreak in Ohio or Region

- We urge parents to plan now for the possibility of schools closing. Arrange for alternate child care at home and home schooling if possible.
- We know this is an anxious time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are sick. We are working closely with local health officials and will keep parents updated.
- In the absence of a vaccine or antiviral medicine, there are some simple behaviors you can take to stay healthy and help prevent spread of the virus.
  - Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
  - Teach your children to cough and sneeze into elbows or upper sleeves. If you cough or sneeze into a tissue, throw the tissue away after use.
  - Teach your children to stay away from people who are sick; keep them home if they are sick. Stay home from work if you are sick, too.
  - Maintain a healthy lifestyle every day. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. Exercise regularly. Drink plenty of fluids and get a good night's sleep. These actions can help boost your immune system and quicken recovery.
- If pandemic flu continues to spread and more Ohioans become sick, health officials may need to close schools for a period of time.
- The purpose of closing schools will be to decrease contact among children in order to lessen their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection. If schools are closed, children should stay home.
- Because pandemic flu is spread easily from person-to-person, it is recommended that you avoid large gatherings of people if possible.
- If you do not have an emergency supply of food, water and medicines, consider creating a stockpile to last your family for at least a one-week stay at home. This stockpile could save you trips to the stores and locations where you might be exposed to the flu virus.
- Recommendations may change during the course of a flu pandemic. We will make public announcements through the media, and parents can call the school district's information line at (INSERT NUMBER).
- For more information on pandemic flu and prevention, visit the State of Ohio's pandemic flu Web site at <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov>.





## Sample News Release B—School Closure

*Schools may choose to use this type of news release to announce closure of schools by health officials or school districts.*

For release (date)

Contact: (contact name and number)

### COUNTY/STATE/SCHOOL orders closure of schools in LOCATION

COUNTY/STATE health officials/SCHOOL DISTRICT officials have ordered the closure of SCHOOL DISTRICT schools as a result of the flu pandemic in the county.

Schools will be closed UNTIL DATE/FURTHER NOTICE. Because flu viruses are easily spread person-to-person, COUNTY/STATE OFFICIALS has also ordered colleges, day care centers and preschools to close. Health officials further caution people against attending large gatherings.

“We know this is an anxious time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We are working closely with schools to deal with the situation and will keep parents updated with information as it becomes available,” said LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIAL.

Closing schools can help limit contact among children and may decrease their risk of getting sick and spreading infection. It is important that children stay home during this time period.

Because many people are sick with the flu, health officials acknowledge it may be hard to get a doctor’s appointment, go to a clinic or be seen in a hospital emergency room. They provided some tips for residents to care for the sick at home:

- Identify a primary caregiver to minimize threat of infection in the household.
- Have patients drink plenty of fluids such as juice or water.
- Keep the sick person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For adults with fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®). **Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers;** it can cause Reye’s syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently.
- Keep people who are sick with the flu away from people who are not sick.
- Watch for symptoms that trigger seeking medical help—high or prolonged fever for more than four to five days, shaking chills or a cough producing a yellow discharge.

More detailed information on caring for others at home is available on Ohio’s pandemic flu Web site at <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov>.

## Sample Statements for School Officials — School Closure

### Outbreak in Ohio or REGION

- STATE/COUNTY/SCHOOL officials have ordered the closure of schools as a result of the flu pandemic flu in STATE/COUNTY.
- Schools may be closed for an extended period of time (for example, up to six weeks).
- We know this is a difficult time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are sick. We are working closely with health officials and will keep parents updated.
- The purpose of closing schools is to decrease contact among children in order to decrease their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection.
- Because pandemic flu is easily spread from person-to-person, children and adults should stay away from other people and groups as much as possible. Avoid large gatherings of people in locations such as homes, shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.
- Parents can help protect their children and prevent the spread of pandemic flu as they would colds and other flu by taking the following precautions:
  - Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
  - Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
  - Teach your children to stay away from people who are sick; keep them home if they are sick. Stay home from work if you are sick, too.
  - Maintain a healthy lifestyle to help prevent infection and quicken recovery. Get plenty of rest. Drink lots of fluid. Exercise regularly. Eat fruits and vegetables every day.
  - Recommendations may change during the course of a flu pandemic. We will make public announcements through the media and parents can call the school district's information line at (INSERT NUMBER).
  - For more information on pandemic flu and prevention, visit Ohio's pandemic flu Web site at <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov>.



## Healthy habits help keep your family well.

### Take care: Cover coughs and sneezes. Keep hands clean.

Healthy habits can protect you and your children from getting germs or spreading germs at home, work and school. Simple actions can stop germs and prevent illnesses.

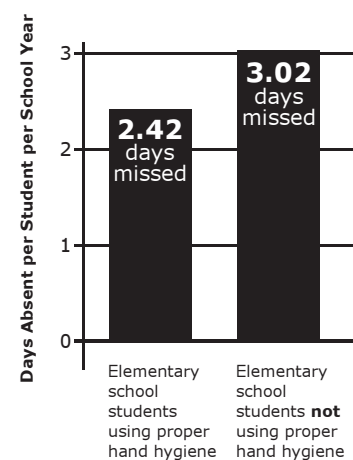
**Cover your mouth and nose.** Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze and drop it in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose as best you can.

**Clean your hands often.** Clean your hands every time you cough or sneeze. Hand washing stops germs. Alcohol-based gels and wipes also work well.

**Remind your children to practice healthy habits, too.** Germs that cause colds, coughs, flu and pneumonia can spread easily.

**Healthy habits help reduce illnesses and sick days.** Feel good about doing the right things to stay well.

### Cleaning Hands Keeps Students In School



### Healthy habits stop germs. At home, work and school.

This message is from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services. To learn more, please visit [www.cdc.gov/germstopper](http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper).





**COVER MOUTH AND NOSE**



**CLEAN HANDS**

## **Cover Coughs and Sneezes. Clean Hands.**

Be a germ stopper at school — and home. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue and throw it away.

### **Clean your hands a lot**

- After you sneeze or cough
- After using the bathroom
- Before you eat
- Before you touch your eyes, mouth or nose

**Washing hands with soap and water is best.** Wash long enough to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. Or, use gels or wipes with alcohol in them. This alcohol kills germs!

**Stop germs. And stop colds and flu.**







**COVER MOUTH AND NOSE**



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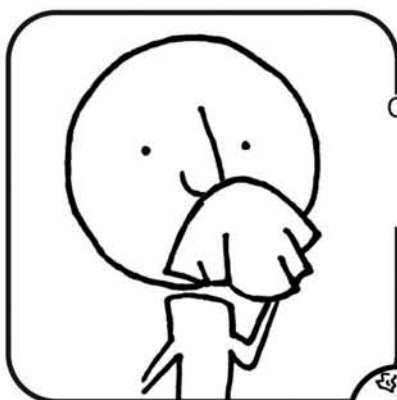
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**Stop germs. And stop colds and flu.**



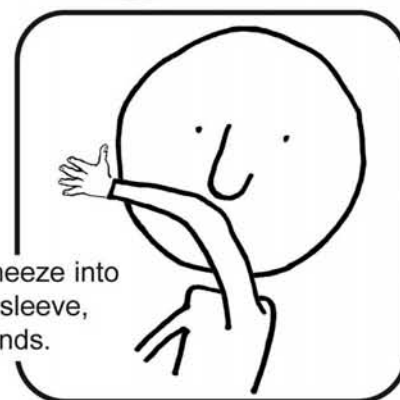
Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

# Cover your Cough



Cover your mouth  
and nose with a  
tissue when you  
cough or sneeze

or  
cough or sneeze into  
your upper sleeve,  
not your hands.

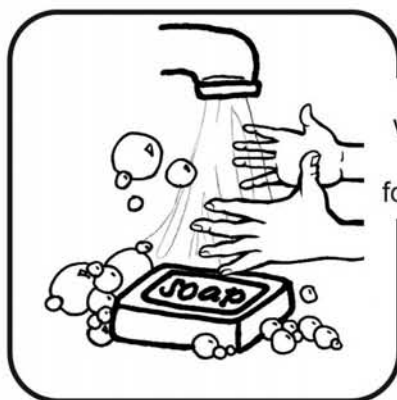


Put your used tissue in  
the waste basket.



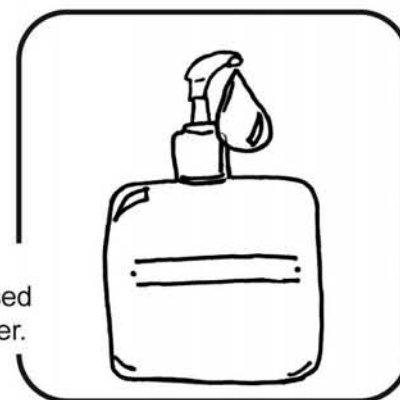
# Clean your Hands

after coughing or sneezing.



Wash hands  
with soap and  
warm water  
for 20 seconds

or  
clean with  
alcohol-based  
hand cleaner.



Minnesota Department of Health  
717 SE Delaware Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
612-676-5414 or 1-877-676-5414  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)



Minnesota  
Antibiotic  
Resistance  
Collaborative

**APIC**  
ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONALS IN  
INFECTION CONTROL AND EPIDEMIOLOGY, INC.

## Resources

### General Influenza (Pandemic, Seasonal, Avian) Information

Ohio Department of Health Pandemic Flu

<http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

World Health Organization (WHO)

<http://www.who.int/topics/influenza/en/>

American Red Cross

<http://www.preparenow.org>

National Association of School Nurses

<http://www.nasn.org/Default.aspx?tabid=316>

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>

Ohio Department of Education

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us>

### Hand Washing and Respiratory Etiquette Sites

National Science Foundation (NSF) Scrub Club

<http://www.scrubclub.org/home.php?fuseaction=main>

It's a SNAP

<http://www.itsasnap.org/index.asp>

Stopping the Germ at Home, Work and School

<http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/>

Cover That Cough Game

<http://www.aahhealth.org/coughgame.asp>

CDC Ounce of Prevention Program

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/op>

### Behavioral Health

Ohio Department of Mental Health

<http://www.mh.state.oh.us>

Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services

<http://www.odadas.state.oh.us>

American Psychiatric Association

<http://www.psych.org>

Ohio Council of Behavioral Healthcare Providers

<http://www.ohiocouncil-bhp.org>

### Regional Directories

Mental health resources by county

<http://www.oacbha.org/Directory/Index2.htm>

Local health department contact information

<https://odhgateway.state.oh.us/LHDDirectory/NetMgr/ODHList.aspx>