

PANDEMIC FLU INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS 2

- Making a Plan 2
- Getting Help with your Plan 6
- Providing Employees with Practical Knowledge 7

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA AND YOU: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 7

PANDEMIC FLU PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES 10

- To Plan for a Pandemic 10
- To Limit the Spread of Germs and Prevent Infection 10
- Items to Have on Hand for an Extended Stay at Home 10

PANDEMIC FLU INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS

WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

In the event of pandemic influenza, businesses will play a key role in protecting employees' health and safety as well as limiting the negative impact to the economy and society. Planning for pandemic influenza is critical. To assist you in your efforts, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed the following checklist for large businesses. It identifies important, specific activities large businesses can do now to prepare, many of which will also help you in other emergencies. Further information can be found at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/> and <http://www.cdc.gov/Partners/Business/>.

Making a Plan

1.1 Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your business:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			Identify a pandemic coordinator and/or team with defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response planning. The planning process should include input from labor representatives.
			Identify essential employees and other critical inputs (e.g. raw materials, suppliers, sub-contractor services/ products, and logistics) required to maintain business operations by location and function during a pandemic.
			Train and prepare ancillary workforce (e.g. contractors, employees in other job titles/descriptions, retirees).
			Develop and plan for scenarios likely to result in an increase or decrease in demand for your products and/or services during a pandemic (e.g. effect of restriction on mass gatherings, need for hygiene supplies).
			Determine potential impact of a pandemic on company business financials using multiple possible scenarios that affect different product lines and/or production sites.
			Determine potential impact of a pandemic on business-related domestic and international travel (e.g. quarantines, border closures).
			Find up-to-date, reliable pandemic information from community public health, emergency management, and other sources and make sustainable links.
			Establish an emergency communications plan and revise periodically. This plan includes identification of key contacts (with back-ups), chain of communications (including suppliers and customers), and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status.
			Implement an exercise/drill to test your plan, and revise periodically.

1.2 Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your employees and customers:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			Forecast and allow for employee absences during a pandemic due to factors such as personal illness, family member illness, community containment measures and quarantines, school and/or business closures, and public transportation closures.
			Implement guidelines to modify the frequency and type of face-to-face contact (e.g. hand-shaking, seating in meetings, office layout, shared workstations) among employees and between employees and customers (refer to CDC recommendations).
			Encourage and track annual influenza vaccination for employees.
			Evaluate employee access to and availability of healthcare services during a pandemic, and improve services as needed.
			Evaluate employee access to and availability of mental health and social services during a pandemic, including corporate, community, and faith-based resources, and improve services as needed.
			Identify employees and key customers with special needs, and incorporate the requirements of such persons into your preparedness plan.

1.3 Establish policies to be implemented during a pandemic:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			Establish policies for employee compensation and sick-leave absences unique to a pandemic (e.g. non-punitive, liberal leave), including policies on when a previously ill person is no longer infectious and can return to work after illness.
			Establish policies for flexible worksite (e.g. telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts).
			Establish policies for preventing influenza spread at the worksite (e.g. promoting respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette, and prompt exclusion of people with influenza symptoms).
			Establish policies for employees who have been exposed to pandemic influenza, are suspected to be ill, or become ill at the worksite (e.g. infection control response, immediate mandatory sick leave).
			Establish policies for restricting travel to affected geographic areas (consider both domestic and international sites), evacuating employees working in or near an affected area when an outbreak begins, and guidance for employees returning from affected areas (refer to CDC travel recommendations).
			Set up authorities, triggers, and procedures for activating and terminating the company's response plan, altering business operations (e.g. shutting down operations in affected areas), and transferring business knowledge to key employees.

1.4 Allocate resources to protect your employees and customers during a pandemic:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g. hand-hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal) in all business locations.
			Enhance communications and information technology infrastructures as needed to support employee telecommuting and remote customer access.
			Ensure availability of medical consultation and advice for emergency response.

1.5 Communicate to and educate your employees:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			Develop and disseminate programs and materials covering pandemic fundamentals (e.g. signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission), personal and family protection and response strategies (e.g. hand hygiene, coughing/sneezing etiquette, contingency plans).
			Anticipate employee fear and anxiety, rumors and misinformation and plan communications accordingly.
			Ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
			Disseminate information to employees about your pandemic preparedness and response plan.
			Provide information for the at-home care of ill employees and family members.
			Develop platforms (e.g. hotlines, dedicated websites) for communicating pandemic status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers inside and outside the worksite in a consistent and timely way, including redundancies in the emergency contact system.
			Identify community sources for timely and accurate pandemic information (domestic and international) and resources for obtaining counter-measures (e.g. vaccines and antivirals).

1.6 Coordinate with external organizations and help your community:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
			Collaborate with insurers, health plans, and major local healthcare facilities to share your pandemic plans and understand their capabilities and plans.
			Collaborate with federal, state, and local public health agencies and/or emergency responders to participate in their planning processes, share your pandemic plans, and understand their capabilities and plans.
			Communicate with local and/or state public health agencies and/or emergency responders about the assets and/or services your business could contribute to the community.
			Share best practices with other businesses in your communities, chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

From Pandemicflu.gov. (2005, December 6). *Business pandemic influenza planning checklist*. Retrieved April 27, 2009, from <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

Getting Help with your Plan

Don't let writer's block keep you from making a plan. Use the links below to view national and state plans to help get you started.

PandemicFlu.gov

The official U.S. government website for information on pandemic flu has checklists to help workplaces, state and local governments, individuals and families, and community and health care organizations plan for a pandemic. <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/checklists.html>

State Pandemic Plans

Listed on the below website are pandemic plans currently available on state websites. Regardless of where you are in creating your company's plan, it's always a good idea to be aware of your state's plan.

<http://pandemicflu.gov/plan/stateplans.html>

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Pandemic Influenza Plan

<http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/>

Providing Employees Practical Knowledge

You will, of course, want to educate your employees on your company's pandemic planning and response policies. You'll also want to provide them with some basic information about pandemic flu. The resources below will give you a good start:

- As part of an initiative called "Take the Lead: Working Together to Prepare Now," the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services has a Web page with samples of talking points, planning checklists, email and newsletter correspondence to employees on the topic of pandemic flu preparation and prevention. It is definitely worth a look at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/takethelead/> to see what you can share with your employees.
- Support your employees' mental health. In addition to encouraging your employees to call your employee assistance plan (EAP) for emotional support during this time, you may want to refer them to the American Psychological Association's Managing Your Anxiety About PANDEMIC Flu available on its Help Center website at <http://www.apahelpcenter.org/articles/article.php?id=194>.
- Share the following two educational materials—*PANDEMIC Flu and You: Questions and Answers* and *Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist for Individuals and Families*. These two items will provide your employees with some information about PANDEMIC flu, basic steps they can take to prevent infection and the spread of any flu, and how to prepare for a possible pandemic.

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA AND YOU: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is PANDEMIC flu?

PANDEMIC Influenza (PANDEMIC flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get PANDEMIC flu, but human infections can and do happen. PANDEMIC flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

Are there human infections with PANDEMIC flu in the U.S.?

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

Is this PANDEMIC flu virus contagious?

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

What are the signs and symptoms of PANDEMIC flu in people?

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

How does PANDEMIC flu spread?

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

How can someone with the flu infect someone else?

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

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

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

Are there medicines to treat PANDEMIC flu?

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

How long can an infected person spread PANDEMIC flu to others?

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

What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?

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

How long can viruses live outside the body?

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

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against PANDEMIC flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

If you get sick with influenza, the CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?

If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible. Do not go to work or school if ill. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. 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.

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. The CDC recommends that when you wash your hands—with soap and warm water—that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. 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.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you live in areas where PANDEMIC influenza cases have been identified and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact their health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

How serious is PANDEMIC flu infection?

Like seasonal flu, PANDEMIC flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. Between 2005 until January 2009, 12 human cases of PANDEMIC flu were detected in the U.S. with no deaths occurring. However, PANDEMIC flu infection can be serious. In September 1988, a previously healthy 32-year-old pregnant woman in Wisconsin was hospitalized for pneumonia after being infected with PANDEMIC flu and died 8 days later. A PANDEMIC flu outbreak in Fort Dix, New Jersey occurred in 1976 that caused more than 200 cases with serious illness in several people and one death.

Can I get PANDEMIC influenza from eating or preparing pork?

No. PANDEMIC influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get PANDEMIC influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). (2009, April 26). *PANDEMIC influenza and you*. Retrieved April 27, 2009, from <http://www.cdc.gov/>

PANDEMIC FLU PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR INDIVIDUALS AND 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.

To Plan for a Pandemic

- Store a 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.
- Ask your doctor and insurance company if you can get an extra supply of your regular prescription drugs.
- Have any 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.

To Limit the Spread of Germs and Prevent Infection

- Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water, and model the correct 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.

Items to Have on Hand for an Extended Stay at Home:

Examples of Food and Non-Perishables	Examples of Medical, Health, and Emergency Supplies
Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, and soups Protein or fruit bars Dry cereal or granola Peanut butter or nuts Dried fruit Crackers Canned juices Bottled water Canned or jarred baby food and formula Pet food	Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment Soap and water, or alcohol-based hand wash Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen Thermometer Anti-diarrhea medication Vitamins Fluids with electrolytes Soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer Flashlight Batteries Portable radio Manual can opener Garbage bags Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers

Source: Pandemicflu.gov. (n.d.). *Pandemic flu planning checklist for individuals and families*. Retrieved April 27, 2009 from <http://www.pandemicflu.gov>.