

Preparing for a Flu Pandemic: Making Individual and Family Plans

This fact sheet provides guidelines to help you and your family plan ahead for a flu pandemic.

Planning Ahead

We should all be prepared for emergencies, whether it is the loss of electricity, extreme weather conditions or being ill. To help you prepare your emergency kit, check out our [Personal Emergency Kit Checklist and the Make a Plan brochure](#).

It is difficult to predict when the next pandemic influenza (flu) will occur or how severe it will be, so it is important to be prepared. The first step in individual and family planning for a flu pandemic is to be informed. Visit the [Pandemic section of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's website](#) to find out what you should know about a flu pandemic: what it is, how it differs from the seasonal flu, the symptoms, possible treatments, as well as what the Government of Ontario is doing to plan for a pandemic.

How Prepared Are You

Depending on the severity of the pandemic, many aspects of everyday life could be disrupted. These disruptions could include everything from school and business closings to the interruption of basic services such as public transportation and health care. An especially severe influenza pandemic could lead to high levels of illness, death, social disruption, and economic loss. Below are a series of questions that you should consider in your pandemic flu planning.

Work

- Does my employer have a pandemic business plan?

- What options are available at work if I need to care for a sick family member?
- What information will my colleagues or I need to know if one or more people in our workplace become ill and what actions will need to be taken?
- What will I do if my income is reduced or lost if I am unable to work or the business is closed?

If your work is going to be critical in a pandemic, discuss strategies to care for ill family members with your employer.

Home

- Are all of my family's immunizations up to date?
- Are there any special needs (e.g., allergy shots, medical services) that we have as a family that may not be fulfilled in a pandemic?
- Who will take care of my children if I get sick?
- Who will take care of my loved ones who are far away?
- Who will take care of sick relatives and friends who depend on me for care?
- Is my emergency supply kit at home ready? If not, download the [Personal Emergency Kit Checklist](#).

School/Daycare

- What plans have the schools/daycares made for pandemic influenza?
- If the school/daycare closes, who will care for my children?

Community

- What is my community's emergency response plan?
- What other information sources are available (e.g., public health hotlines)?
- Are there people in my community, such as elderly neighbours, single parents of small children, or people without adequate resources, who may require special assistance?

Developing Your Pandemic Flu Plan

We should all have a plan at home to ensure we can be self-sufficient in an emergency. A detailed list of what to consider for your emergency is available in the [Make a Plan brochure](#).

Whether you are developing a plan for yourself or your family, your pandemic flu plan needs to include the following:

An emergency contacts sheet that contains the names, phone numbers, and addresses of the following individuals or organizations:

- Local personal emergency contact (such as a family member or close friend);
- Out-of-town emergency contact;
- Hospitals near work, school, and home;
- Family physician;
- Public health department;
- Pharmacy;
- Employer contact and emergency information;
- School contact and emergency information; and
- Animal hospital.

An emergency health information sheet that includes the following information for each family member:

- Name;
- Allergies;
- Past and current medical conditions; and
- Current medications and drug dosages;
- A [Personal Emergency Kit Checklist](#):

- Keep your emergency contacts and emergency health information sheets with your emergency kit for quick reference.

Note: It is important to review your plan every six months to ensure it's up to date. The change from Daylight Savings Time to Standard Time is a good reminder to update your emergency plans and kits.

Discussing Your Pandemic Flu Plan

Now that you have gathered all of the facts and supplies, you are ready to sit down with your family or loved ones to discuss your pandemic flu plan. It is very important to share your vital information with someone you trust, especially if you live alone, are a single parent, or a caregiver.

If you are part of a family with young children, it is also important for you to talk to them about the following topics:

- The items in your emergency kit, when and how to use them, and where the kit will be stored.
- Good hygiene habits, such as correct handwashing techniques, covering their mouths when coughing or sneezing, and washing hands often.
- How they will be cared for if they get sick or what would be needed to care for them.

For More Information

Visit our website at :

www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic

INFOline 1-866-801-7242

TTY 1-800-387-5559