

PANDEMIC FLU



A Guide for Service Members and Families

*Be Prepared... Stay Healthy...
Get Informed*



PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

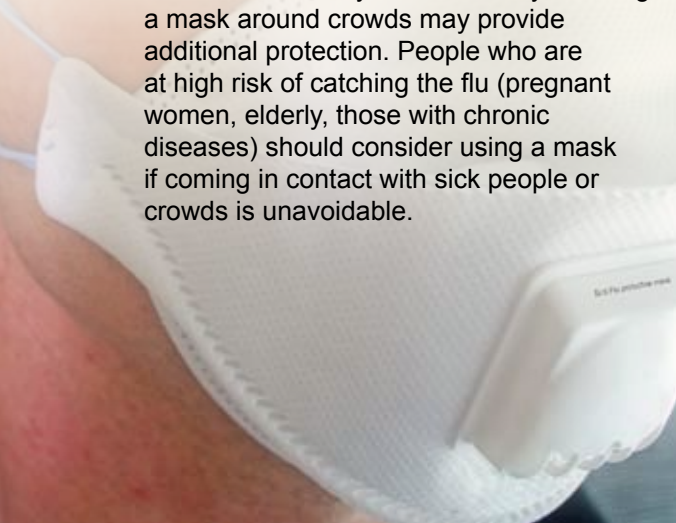
When pandemic influenza strikes your community, take the temperature of every member of your household on a daily basis. One of the earliest signs of flu infection is a high fever (over 101 degrees F). If you think anyone in your family is catching the flu, contact a health care provider according to your community flu response plan. This may include using a flu hot line or satellite flu clinic.

When flu is in your community, some measures you can take to reduce the risk of catching the flu include limiting your contact to crowds and working from home if possible. Keep children at home – away from school – and regularly wash your hands.

Flu viruses are most commonly transmitted through exposure to an infected person's coughing or sneezing or coming in contact with respiratory secretions. Surgical, procedure, or respirator masks, when used correctly, may reduce your risk from pandemic influenza, especially when combined with other personal protection efforts.

While the effectiveness of wearing masks in public is unknown, if you have a mask the following guidelines should be followed:

- If available, masks should be worn by people with the flu when they come in contact with others who do not have the flu. People who have the flu should stay home. If they must go out, those sick with the flu should wear a mask.
- When the flu is in your community, wearing a mask around crowds may provide additional protection. People who are at high risk of catching the flu (pregnant women, elderly, those with chronic diseases) should consider using a mask if coming in contact with sick people or crowds is unavoidable.



- There are different kinds of masks. Surgical masks, when worn by people with the flu, may help reduce the risk of spreading the disease to others. A N-95 mask or respirator, if fitted properly, may provide better protection than a surgical mask. Health care providers and others who are exposed to aerosols usually wear these. N-95 (or better) masks cost more but may be easier to purchase. Surgical masks are generally used once and discarded. Some N-95 type masks can be used for longer periods of time.
- Masks should fit as per the manufacturer's recommendations. Most masks will not fit small children.
- **Never** wash or disinfect masks.
- **Never** share masks with others

KNOWING THE FACTS IS THE BEST PREPARATION

Identify sources you can count on for reliable information. If a pandemic occurs, having accurate and reliable information will be critical.

Visit www.pandemicflu.gov for general information on pandemic flu and www.dod.mil/pandemicflu for information specific to service members and their families. Service members and their families who have concerns about pandemic influenza can get additional information by calling, toll-free, 1-800-497-6261.

Another source for information on pandemic influenza is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline at: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636). This line is available in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

TTY: 1-888-232-6348. Questions can be e-mailed to cdcinfo@cdc.gov.



Force Health Protection & Readiness
Safeguarding the health of those who protect us
As of 3 January 2007

PANDEMIC FLU – WE ALL PLAY A ROLE IN FIGHTING THIS WAR!

While the federal, state and local governments are working hard to implement plans for responding to pandemic influenza, there are some steps that the DoD beneficiary can take that are necessary to protect you and your family.

PREPARE

There are many simple things you can do to prepare for pandemic influenza just as you would prepare for any other disaster.

- Plan for the possibility that usual services may be disrupted. These could include medical services, including pharmacies, banks, stores, restaurants, government offices, grocery stores, schools, daycare, and post offices.
- Think about how you can rely less on transportation during a pandemic.
- Consider other ways to get to work, or, if you can, work from home.
- DoD schools will probably be closed. If so, children should be kept home.
- Find support systems at your installation, people who are thinking about the same issues you are thinking about. Share ideas.
- Prepare backup plans for taking care of loved ones who are far away.
- Consider how to care for people with special needs in case the services they rely on are not available.



- Stock a supply of water, food, and one extra refill of any recurring prescription drug you may be taking. During a pandemic you may not be able to get to a store. Even if you can get to a store, it may be out of supplies. Public waterworks services may also be interrupted. Stocking supplies can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.

Store foods that:

- are nonperishable (will keep for a long time) and don't require refrigeration
- are easy to prepare in case you are unable to cook
- require little or no water, so you can conserve water for drinking

MAKE GOOD HYGIENE A HABIT

Take common-sense steps to limit the spread of flu germs.

- Frequent and vigorous hand washing with soap and water is a simple way to prevent the spread of infection.
- First wet your hands, then apply liquid or clean bar soap.
- Work up a good lather and wash all of the surfaces of your skin, including the wrist, palms, backs of your hands, fingers, and fingernails. Wash your hands for at least 15 to 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands thoroughly.
- Dry your hands. Use your paper towel to turn off the water after you have finished.

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Use enough gel to keep your hands wet for 30 seconds; rub your hands until the gel is dry.
- You don't need to use water; the alcohol in the gel kills the germs on your hands.

SIMPLE WAYS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF GERMS

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Put used tissues in a wastebasket and empty it often.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue.
- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs often spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too. Keeping at least three feet from those with flu can reduce your risk.
- If you get the flu, stay home from work, school, and social gatherings. This can help prevent others from catching your illness.

THINK YOU HAVE THE FLU?

If you develop flu-like symptoms or a fever – especially if you are in a high risk category as listed above – you should consult your health care provider. Your community may have flu hot lines or satellite flu clinics. Check what is available in your community.

