

YOUR HEALTH IS IN YOUR HANDS

Know the Facts

The Differences Between Seasonal and Pandemic Influenza

SEASONAL FLU	PANDEMIC FLU
Outbreaks generally happen in annual seasonal patterns; usually in the winter.	Occurs rarely, only three times in the 20 th century with the last pandemic in 1968.
Usually some immunity built up from previous exposure	No previous exposure meaning little or no pre-existing immunity.
Healthy adults usually not at risk for serious complications. The very young, the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk for serious complications and even death.	Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications and death.
Health systems can usually meet public and patient needs	Health systems may be overwhelmed
Vaccines are developed based on known virus strains and are available for annual flu seasons.	Vaccine most likely to not be available until 6–8 months after a pandemic strain appears.
Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available.	Effective antivirals may be in limited supply, if effective.
Average U.S. deaths are approximately 36,000/yr.	Number of deaths could be quite high. For example, 675,000 deaths in the 1918.
Symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain. Death is often caused by complications, such as pneumonia.	Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent
Generally causes modest impact on society. For example, some school closings, sick employees encouraged to stay home.	May cause major impact on society. For example, widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, and cancellation of large public gatherings.
Manageable impact on domestic and world economy.	Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy.