

Pandemic Flu

Returning To Work



HOW PANDEMIC FLU SPREADS

- Pandemic flu may spread the same way as seasonal flu, but we will not know until it happens.
- When a person with pandemic flu sneezes, coughs, talks or laughs the pandemic flu virus can spread into the air as droplets.
- The droplets can spread to people and surfaces up to 6 feet away.
- The pandemic flu virus can spread to your hands if you touch anything that has the virus on it. If you then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, you might get pandemic flu.

SYMPTOMS OF PANDEMIC FLU

- Until a new flu virus causes a pandemic, the symptoms are not known.
- We expect pandemic flu symptoms to be similar to seasonal flu, but they may be worse and new symptoms could occur.
- Usual symptoms of seasonal flu are:
 - ▶ Fever (usually high)
 - ▶ Headache
 - ▶ Tiredness (can be extreme)
 - ▶ Cough
 - ▶ Sore throat
 - ▶ Runny or stuffy nose
 - ▶ Body aches
 - ▶ Nausea and vomiting
 - ▶ Diarrhea (more in children)

ANTIVIRAL MEDICINES FOR PANDEMIC FLU

- Antivirals are medicines used to treat pandemic flu and must be prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- Taking antiviral medicine may shorten the time when you are contagious (able to spread pandemic flu to others) and might allow you to return to work sooner.
- If you are taking antiviral medicine for pandemic flu, talk to your healthcare provider about when to return to work.

Note:

Even if you are taking antivirals, you should not return to work or to school for at least 48 hours after your last fever.

**Stay home when sick • Clean your hands
Cover your coughs and sneezes**

STAY HOME AND AWAY FROM OTHERS

- At least 5 days after your symptoms first appeared AND
- At least 48 hours after your fever has ended without taking fever-reducing medicines such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- Studies show you are most contagious and likely to spread flu virus to others for at least 5 days after your first symptoms start AND
- At least 48 hours after your last fever.



AFTER RETURNING TO WORK

- You may be coughing for weeks but not be contagious.
- Always cover your coughs or sneezes with tissues and throw them in the trash.
- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing as soon as you can.
- Keep your hands clean by washing with soap and water or by using alcohol-based hand gels.
- Avoid touching people and surfaces with unwashed hands.
- Return home or stay home and contact your healthcare provider if:
 - ▶ Fever comes back.
 - ▶ Cough worsens.
 - ▶ Breathing is not normal.
 - ▶ You have other symptoms that worry you.

Employers may offer special sick leave options in a pandemic.

Let your work know if you are:

- ***Sick with pandemic flu***
- ***Home caring for someone who is sick***

LEARN MORE AT:

www.publichealth.va.gov/flu

www.flu.gov

<https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs/>

www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs



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www.publichealth.va.gov/InfectionDontPassItOn