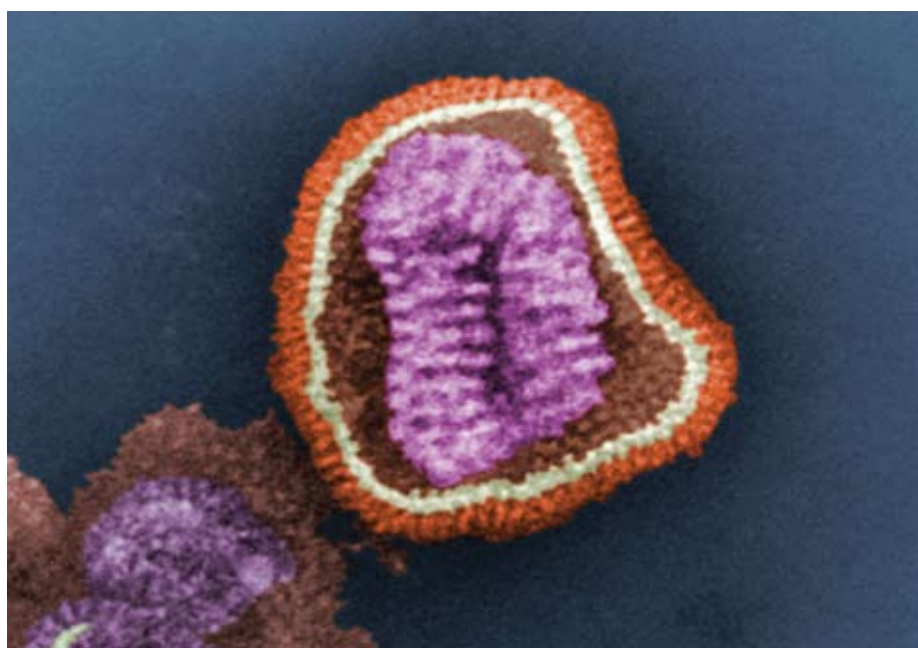




# Working from the same page consistent messages for CDEM

## PART B: Hazard-specific information



H1N1 influenza virus. Image: Cynthia Goldsmith

# Pandemic influenza

► Learn about your community's risks from pandemic influenza.

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#### **CORE ACTION MESSAGES IN THIS CHAPTER (pp 7-10)**

- ▶ **Learn about pandemic influenza and how you can protect yourself**
- ▶ **Get your household ready**
- ▶ **Be informed about influenza pandemic: learn how to recognise the symptoms, where to get help and what to do in a pandemic**

**For general readiness, every household should create and practice a Household Emergency Plan and assemble and maintain Emergency Survival Items and a Getaway Kit. In addition, every household should take pandemic-specific precautions and plan for and practice what to do if a pandemic occurs.**

**Please note: Core Action Messages should be read in conjunction with the rest of the text in this chapter.**

## Awareness messages

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### **Why talk about pandemic influenza?**

A human influenza pandemic occurs when a new strain of influenza virus emerges, spreading around the world and infecting many people at once.

An influenza virus capable of causing a pandemic is one that people have no natural immunity to, that can easily spread from person to person, and that is capable of causing severe disease. The new influenza virus could spread rapidly around the world, infecting many people. This would be a human influenza pandemic.

A pandemic can occur at any time. On average influenza pandemics occur three times each century. The most serious pandemic in the twentieth century was in 1918 when around 8000 New Zealanders died.

We all need to be prepared for a pandemic in order to help prevent spread and look after ourselves as best as we can.

The Ministry of Health is working with the health sector and other Government agencies to ensure New Zealand is as prepared as possible for a potential pandemic.

### **Who will decide if the world is having a pandemic?**

The World Health Organization (WHO) will determine when a virus is spreading from person to person in sufficient numbers to constitute a pandemic.

WHO and many countries have intensive surveillance programmes to track the spread of influenza. These programmes will provide global early warning of human infections so governments can begin implementing “pandemic alert” phases designed to track the progress of the disease spread nationally.

For more information, see the WHO website, [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

### **Who will be in charge if there is a pandemic in New Zealand?**

The New Zealand Government will ensure there is an appropriate response from all agencies involved. The Ministry of Health will take the lead in a national health emergency.

The details of how New Zealand will manage an influenza pandemic are laid out in the *National Health Emergency Plan: New Zealand Influenza Pandemic Action Plan 2010* available from [www.moh.govt.nz/influenza-h1n1](http://www.moh.govt.nz/influenza-h1n1).

### **Will travel and trade be affected?**

In an effort to prevent or slow the entry of pandemic influenza into New Zealand, it may be necessary to restrict passenger travel from affected areas into New Zealand. New Zealand, as an island country, can control travel into and out of the country more easily than most other countries. This means that New Zealand may be able to prevent or delay the entry of pandemic influenza into the country, an important advantage.

On the other hand if we are badly affected it may be necessary to restrict passenger travel out of New Zealand to other countries.

Transport of goods by sea or by airfreight need not be restricted, but it is anticipated that the amount of international trade may fall at the height of a pandemic because production and transport will be reduced due to sickness. This may impact on both imports and exports. Businesses need to consider this issue as part of their business continuity planning.

In some circumstances if one part of the country is badly affected by pandemic influenza but other areas are unaffected then it may be necessary to restrict travel into and out of that area. Arrangements will be made for critical goods and services to be provided.

The Government will make any final decisions on border management with input from a range of government departments.

### **What might the Government do to manage an influenza pandemic?**

There will be public announcements on TV, the radio and through other media channels that there is an influenza pandemic and providing information about what to do and where to go for help.

General, pre-recorded, information about pandemic influenza will be available at 0800 FLU LINE (0800 358 5463). Information on 0800 FLU LINE will be updated regularly.

The New Zealand Government will consider taking action to stop or limit the spread of pandemic influenza through a range of potential measures, including:

- border management
- isolation of sick people
- quarantine of contacts
- restriction of public gatherings
- closure of education facilities.

Decisions on the types of controls that will be implemented will depend at the time on a number of factors concerning the pandemic virus, including the death rate, the age groups most affected, and the localities concerned.

**How will New Zealanders get treatment or health advice in an influenza pandemic?**

This will depend on the severity of the pandemic and how many people it affects. If you have health concerns, you will be able to ring the national free 24-hour health advice number, Healthline (0800 611 116). There will also be public announcements on national and local TV, the radio and through other media channels providing information about what to do and where to go for help.

There is no doubt that in a severe pandemic, hospitals and primary care practitioners such as GPs will find it difficult to deal with large numbers of people with influenza. Normal health services may not be available for weeks.

If you are sick you may be asked to phone your local doctor or nurse for advice, rather than visiting a waiting room and potentially spreading influenza. District Health Boards are planning to set-up special Community Based Assessment Centres (CBACs), where people with influenza-like symptoms can go to be assessed.

In a pandemic people may also be asked to look after each other at home and information will be provided through a variety of media channels about how best to do so.

**How many people could get sick or die if a pandemic virus reaches New Zealand?**

Until a pandemic develops and the nature of any disease in New Zealand becomes known there is no way to know how many people may get ill or die.

For planning purposes the New Zealand Government has developed a planning model based on the impact that a 1918-size influenza pandemic could have today. This model indicates that up to about 1.6 million people could become ill over an 8-week period, with about 33,000 deaths over that time. It is very important to emphasise that this is not a prediction or a forecast of what will happen.

The planning model was developed from historical data to provide a consistent set of figures around which to develop response and contingency plans, and it is important that our planning considers the possibility of such a very severe future pandemic. As noted above, there is no way to predict what will happen ahead of time, and it is entirely possible that a future pandemic could be very different.

**Will I be able to get essential supplies and access other services?**

In a large scale pandemic the production and transportation of supplies internationally and within New Zealand will be affected. This may restrict the range of groceries and other supplies that are available.

Other services may differ from what you are used to. Phone and Internet services may become overloaded sometimes, and there will be fewer people available to repair faults in services, resulting in a reduction in some services.

Central, regional, and local government agencies will work together with businesses to help ensure basic essential supplies are available so that communities can look after themselves.

**How will I get support?**

Family, friends and neighbours should look out for one another in order to provide support.

Special arrangements will be put in place to offer welfare assistance for those in need, so you need to look out for public announcements on TV, national and local radio, web-sites and through other media channels.

## Action messages

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### Getting ready for a pandemic

Here are a few simple things you can do now to prepare for a pandemic. Follow the basic health rules.

C-H-I-R-P to make yourself and you family safe:

- **C**over your coughs and sneezes – use tissues, dispose of them properly, then wash your hands.
- **H**ygienic hands – wash hands often and dry them well.
- **I**solate yourself – keep at least one metre away from others and stay home if you become ill.
- **R**educe germs in your home and workplace – regularly disinfect common surfaces like phones, handles, remote controls, taps, toys.
- **P**repare – put together an emergency plan and kit.

### Have a plan

Make a plan with family and friends, which includes:

1. Who could help with food and supplies if you and your household are ill.
2. The telephone numbers of people who live near you, as well as your doctor's phone number (keep this in a place that is easy to see, like on the fridge door – you can use the resource *Preparing your household for flu pandemic* available from [www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz)). If farming, who can help with stock management.

### Build up your Emergency Survival Items

3. Have a supply of food and drinks to last for at least a week. Choose long lasting foods in cans and packets and dried foods.
4. Paracetamol and ibuprofen are good for bringing down a fever and reducing aches and pains. Do not use anything else for children unless you talk to your doctor or pharmacist first.
5. Masks worn by sick people can help stop the spread of germs. You can buy masks from a pharmacy (or from a hardware store). If there is a pandemic, people will be told how and when to use their masks. A mask can be worn only for a short time, and needs changing when wet from sneezing and coughing.
6. Have tissues (or toilet paper) and plastic bags – supermarket bags are good – to put used tissues into.
7. Think about things to do if you and your family have to stay home for a week or so (e.g., books, games and videos).

If you have prescription medicines (e.g., for blood pressure), always renew your prescription well before you run out.

For further information on emergency preparedness see the inside back cover of the Yellow Pages, and check the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management website: [www.getthru.govt.nz](http://www.getthru.govt.nz). (**See** Emergency Survival Items)

### Get to know your neighbours

One of the best ways to be prepared for any emergency is to make contact with other people to discuss the event before it happens.

Get in touch with the people who live on each side of you and on opposite sides of the street – this will create a circle of support.

Swap phone numbers so you can check-in with each other without having to visit. Agree on a signal, like tying a towel to the door handle, to let people know when you really need help.

If everyone in your community makes arrangements like this, no one will be left out.

### Get an annual flu jab

Ask your doctor for an influenza vaccination each year. The usual yearly flu jabs will not protect you against a new pandemic virus, but they will help stop you getting ill with other influenza viruses. Because these viruses change all the time, you need to get vaccinated every year.

Vaccination is free for people aged 65 years and over, and adults and children with certain long-term (chronic) conditions.

### Workplace and business planning

There are many resources to help your planning:

8. *Business continuity planning guide* (available from [www.med.govt.nz](http://www.med.govt.nz)). This document contains a range of information designed for general use in pandemic planning by businesses and other organisations in New Zealand.
9. *Minimising the risk and impact of an influenza pandemic on your business* (available from [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz)). This practical guide is designed to help employers prepare and respond to the health and business risks created by an influenza pandemic.
10. *Pandemic planning information kit* (available from [www.med.govt.nz](http://www.med.govt.nz)). The kit is tailored for infrastructure providers in the energy, communications, transport, water and waste sectors. It contains a version of the Planning Guide and some associated documents to assist in planning.
11. *Preventing the spread of infection poster* (available from [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz)) provides information on how businesses can prevent the spread of infection during a pandemic using a visual summary of the range of controls recommended.
12. *Advice for workplaces on air conditioning and influenza* (available from [www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz)). The Ministry of Health and the Department of Labour recommend that all enclosed spaces be adequately ventilated to reduce the risk of droplet spread in enclosed spaces. If air-conditioning units are used to provide such ventilation, rather than open windows, then these units must be properly designed and maintained to the appropriate standards.

### **How will I know what to do in a pandemic?**

Stay informed.

There will be public announcements, and regular updates using a variety of communications channels. Look and listen out for both national and local announcements, as circumstances may vary from one part of the country to another.

The announcements will deal with a range of issues covering health, welfare and travel.

### **What should people do at home to deal with an influenza pandemic?**

Implement your plan (see above), and make sure you:

13. Stay home if you are sick and keep away from other people – avoid visitors and visiting others.
14. Wash and dry your hands before handling food, after coughing, sneezing, using the bathroom, wiping or nose-blowing (whether your nose or your child's), and when looking after sick people.
15. Keep coughs and sneezes covered. Tissues are best. Put the tissue in a covered, lined rubbish bin or plastic bag.
16. Give people who have a fever and/or diarrhoea plenty to drink.
17. Use paracetamol or ibuprofen for reducing fever.

### **What can I do to protect others and myself in an influenza pandemic?**

Infected people coughing and sneezing very easily spread influenza. To reduce the chances of getting influenza there are things you can do, such as ensuring good health hygiene habits. Washing and drying your hands well is one of the best ways of protecting yourself against the spread of influenza.

18. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and dry hands well, or use an alcohol-based rub.
19. Wash and dry hands:
  - before preparing food and eating
  - after coughing or sneezing, blowing noses, wiping children's noses, visiting the toilet or looking after sick people.
20. Keep your coughs and sneezes covered. Put tissues straight into a covered, lined rubbish bin or a plastic bag.
21. Try to stay a metre away from people to reduce the spread of influenza.

### **Support others**

During a pandemic everyone in your community needs to work together to help one another. However, you can only help others effectively when you know that you and your family and flatmates are safe.

Once you have planned to take care of yourselves and your neighbours, consider how you can support your wider community.

Who in your community is likely to need help? Are there people who are new to the area, from another country, live on their own or have specific needs due to a disability, or age-related issue? Are there solo parents, or institutions that may struggle such as rest homes?

There will be some groups of people or networks which already exist in your community, such as your local civil defence emergency management, neighbourhood support, church or sports groups, schools, marae, local voluntary groups and service organisations. Make contact with them. Find out what they are doing.

Local government civil defence emergency management offices are also making plans to support the community in a pandemic. They will have a role in ensuring the continuity of basic supplies and in coordination of support efforts. Contact your local council for more information.

## Pandemic influenza general information

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### Useful links

- [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)
- [www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz)
- [www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/nz-influenza-pandemic-action-plan-2006](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/nz-influenza-pandemic-action-plan-2006)
- [www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/5196/\\$File/prepare-your-household.pdf](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/pagesmh/5196/$File/prepare-your-household.pdf)
- [www.dol.govt.nz/PDFs/pandemic-practical-guide.pdf](http://www.dol.govt.nz/PDFs/pandemic-practical-guide.pdf)
- [www.rural-support.org.nz/](http://www.rural-support.org.nz/)
- [www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/adverse-events/](http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/adverse-events/)

### Useful numbers

Your important emergency household plan telephone numbers. Fill this out and keep this leaflet with your emergency items.

Contact	Details
Local authority emergency helpline	
Insurance company 24-hour	
Insurance number and policy number	
Local radio station (Frequency )	
School	
Family and neighbours	
Bank phone number and details	
Work phone numbers	
Medical Center/GP	
Local police station	
Vet/kennel/cattery	
Local hotel or B&B	
Gas supplier and meter number	
Electricity supplier and meter number	
Water supplier and meter number	
Electrician	
Plumber	
Builder	

