

Pandemic Flu

What is a pandemic?

“A pandemic is a *global* disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza A virus emerges for which there is little to no immunity in the human population, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide” (Flu.gov, 2009). The most recent pandemic flu virus is H1N1.

Prerequisites for Pandemic Influenza

A new influenza virus emerges to which the general population has little/no immunity.

The new virus must be able to replicate in humans and cause disease.

The new virus must be efficiently transmitted from one human to another.

What are the facts?

The U.S. Government is actively preparing and they will attempt to contain any potential outbreaks. School districts have been asked to have plans in place to deal with this situation if it should occur. USD 415 has been actively planning for such an occurrence, and feels that every effort is being made to take a proactive approach in preparing for a pandemic in our area. In order to assist the public health department, schools are monitoring and reporting symptoms of ill students. In the event that a cluster of “flu-like” symptoms are noticed among students/staff, public health officials will be notified.

As it has been reported in the news, humans have tested positive for H1N1 flu in 177 countries. There is no way to completely stop a flu pandemic; however, the government is working with schools and the public to reduce the effects of H1N1.

Administrative and nursing staff will encourage students and staff to follow proper and thorough hygiene practices: good hand washing, cough or sneeze into your elbow, eat a balanced diet and drink plenty of water, get adequate rest and exercise, stay home when you are sick. Reliable web sites with additional information are also being made available.

If you have concerns about your health or the health of our child, you are encouraged to seek advice from your family physician immediately.

How does the virus spread and what are the symptoms

The same way seasonal flu viruses spread

- *Respiratory droplets
- *Coughs & sneezes
- *Touching objects touched by an infectious person, then touching your nose or mouth

Droplets aren't able to travel long distances through the air
3-6 feet maximum

Virus survives up to 72 hours on surfaces, depending on moisture

The clinical picture . . . so far

Symptoms like other flu infections

- *Abrupt fever, ≥ 100 degree F
- *Cough, sore throat, runny nose
- *Aches, chills, fatigue
- *Unusual: diarrhea and vomiting

Almost everyone infected so far has recovered fully, but

- *Hospitalization rate higher than expected for seasonal flu
- *The virus is affecting younger populations than seasonal flu

This picture could change, as the virus changes its genetic make-up

Seasonal Epidemics vs. Pandemics

Seasonal Influenza

- A public health problem each year
- Usually some immunity built up from previous exposures to the same subtype

Infants and elderly most at risk

Influenza Pandemics

- * Appear in the human population rarely and unpredictably
- *Human population lacks any immunity
- *All age groups, including healthy young adults

What do you do if you are developing any of these symptoms and the Flu Pandemic has already started?

1. Take your temperature; write it and the time and date down.
2. Call your doctor or health care provider asking for advice; give accurate information and follow their advice.
3. If you need something, ask a friend to help; make sure they are aware that you may be contagious.
4. Go to bed and stay warm. Drink plenty of fluids, non-alcoholic, hot water, lemon and honey are good.
5. Call or email your place of work saying you are unable to come in because of the virus. This tells them why they have not seen you and allows them to cover for your absence.
6. Whatever you do, you must avoid sneezing and coughing over other people.
7. Keep your hands clean; remember to clean after coughing or sneezing.
8. Stay in one room as much as possible.
9. Take any medication provided by your doctor or health service.
10. Keep a record of your temperature, date and time, and how your symptoms progress.
11. Note: If you have no one to check on you, please give careful thought as to how you would summon help if your condition worsens. Your personal health care provider can give specific information on managing your illness.

What should you NOT do if you feel you have these symptoms especially if the pandemic has been officially recognized?

1. Going to work is out. Maybe you can work from home?
2. Do not cough and sneeze over people.
3. Shopping is out. Organize home deliveries.
4. Meeting friends is not a good idea.
5. Do not exercise as you will increase your temperature and use up your body's reserves of energy.
6. Don't get too close to other people.
7. Don't share your medicine with other people; half may not be enough for either of you, and you must complete the medication. Not completing the course of the medication or sharing may allow the virus to adapt to this vaccine creating a whole new mutation and setting off a new round of the pandemic.
8. Alcohol will make it more difficult to get well.
9. Do not smoke.

What can you and your family do to find out more?

Log onto www.hiawathaschools.org and go to the link regarding Pandemic flu. We will update you with information if it should be necessary to put our school district's "Pandemic Flu Plan" into effect.

Log onto www.pandemicflu.gov for the most recent advice regarding the virus and how to prepare for a possible pandemic. A regular flu vaccine is always recommended yearly.



Mark Parkinson, Governor
Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT
Division of Health

www.kdheks.gov

Dear Parents,

As you probably know by now, a new type of influenza (flu) is currently being seen in Kansas and throughout the United States. Because the novel H1N1 flu virus (referred to as “swine flu” early on) was not seen until earlier this year, no one has natural resistance against it. In a short time the virus has spread to more than 160 countries in every continent, and in June 2009, the World Health Organization declared that a pandemic – a global epidemic – had begun.

Fortunately, illness from this virus is usually mild and only lasts a few days; although in some cases severe disease and death can result. So far, most cases have occurred in children and young adults and some of those have needed hospitalization.

The symptoms of this flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu. They include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting. People with other medical problems, and women who are pregnant, are at especially high risk of serious complications.

Schools can be easy places for flu viruses to spread. State and local public health officials are working closely with your school district now to take steps that will limit the spread of the pandemic virus. Parents must do their part to keep the virus out of Kansas schools, so that no schools are forced to close because of outbreaks of this infection.

Here is what your school needs you, and all parents, to do:

Keep children who are sick at home. Don’t send them to school or take them anywhere else, except to receive needed medical care. Ill children should stay home until they are fever free (without the use of fever-reducing medicine like Tylenol or Ibuprofen) for 24 hours or more.

Plan for the possibility that you will be called to bring your child home from school if he or she gets sick while in school. Schools are setting aside special “sick rooms” for students who show signs of illness, until they are taken home.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and insist that your children do the same. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow.

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing, and see that your children follow your example. Alcohol-based hand cleaners will also work. This year all schools will make sure that children have the time and places to wash their hands often during the school day.

Remind children to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread when a

person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Make sure that your children practice other good health habits. See that they get plenty of sleep, get exercise, drink plenty of fluids, and eating healthy foods.

Get your child vaccinated for seasonal flu soon. See that your child receives the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available in the fall.

Stay informed. Watch for information from your child's school. Other resources can be found at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's special H1N1 flu webpage: <http://www.kdheks.gov/H1N1/index.htm>. More information can be found here: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general_info.htm from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If you have questions about H1N1 flu, please contact your school nurse or family's usual healthcare provider. You can also get more information from your local public health department.

Thank you for working together with your school and your community to slow down the spread of pandemic flu in Kansas.

**Yours sincerely,
Jason Eberhart-Phillips, MD, MPH
Kansas State Health Officer
Director of Health, KDHE**