

# 10 Things You Should Know About Pandemic Flu

1. **Pandemic flu is much more serious than seasonal flu.** It is likely to be more severe, widespread, and deadlier than seasonal influenza.
2. **A pandemic flu will be global.** Travel routes will make it easy for the virus to spread quickly across borders. Communities across the U.S. and around the world will be affected at the same time.
3. **The single best thing you can do to avoid getting any flu virus is to wash your hands.** Wash frequently with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
4. **A vaccination will not be available at the outset of a pandemic.** Once a pandemic flu virus is identified, it could take several months to develop and produce a vaccination.
5. **Pandemic flu and bird flu are not the same thing.** A pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of human disease. Bird flu mainly affects birds.
6. **A pandemic may cause widespread social and economic disruption.** Services provided by government agencies, public utilities, stores, the post office, and other businesses may be limited. Transportation services may be disrupted and schools may be closed.
7. **It may be difficult or impossible to work during a flu pandemic.** Find out if you can work from home and ask your employer if they have a plan in place. Plan for a possible reduction in income if you are unable to work or if your workplace closes.
8. **A pandemic could overwhelm the health care system.** High numbers of ill people during a severe pandemic will put enormous pressure on our health care system. Prepare to follow instructions from your health care provider and public health officials about how to obtain medical advice and receive care.
9. **We will need to pull together as communities during a pandemic.** We will need to check on our neighbors and help those around us, especially if we experience major social and economic disruptions. This may be as simple as calling your neighbor from a “phone tree” list, or dropping off supplies on the doorstep of a homebound friend.
10. **There are simple steps you can take to prepare for a flu pandemic.** Learn how to protect your health, stock your home with supplies, and make household plans. (see checklist inside)

For more information on pandemic flu, visit:

- Public Health – Seattle & King County: [www.metrokc.gov/health/pandemicflu](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/pandemicflu)
- Washington State Department of Health: [www.doh.wa.gov/panflu](http://www.doh.wa.gov/panflu)
- Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)