



# Preparing for H1N1 (Swine flu) in Alaska

[www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov)

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population, begins to cause illness, and spreads easily person-to-person worldwide. The federal government, states, tribal organizations, communities and industry are prepared to respond to an influenza pandemic.

An influenza pandemic is likely to last for weeks to months in any given community. This could require temporary changes in how we operate in many areas of society such as schools, businesses, churches, transportation and public services.

An informed and prepared public can take appropriate actions to decrease their risk during a pandemic.

## *During a flu pandemic, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services will:*

- Support community efforts to address pandemic influenza in local disaster plans.
- Distribute stockpiled medical supplies including antiviral drugs.
- Implement Alaska Pandemic Influenza Plan and update the response to new information as the pandemic develops.
- Expand public information and communication on pandemic flu.
- Ensure that communication systems between federal, state, tribal and local agencies work during emergencies and disasters.
- Provide guidance on use of antiviral drugs and vaccines.

## *Individuals, business and communities should:*

- Develop preparedness plans as you would for other public health emergencies. For check lists and sample plans go to [www.hss.state.ak.us/prepared/](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/prepared/)
- Participate and promote public health efforts in your state and community.
- Implement prevention and control actions recommended by your public health officials and providers.
- Adopt business/school practices that encourage sick employees/students to stay home.
- Anticipate how to function with a significant portion of the work force/school absent. Families should be prepared to care for ill family members.
- Practice good health habits, including eating a balanced diet, exercising daily, tobacco avoidance, getting sufficient rest and take these common sense steps to stop the spread of germs:
  - ▶ Wash hands frequently with soap and water or waterless hand cleaner.
  - ▶ Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues.
  - ▶ Stay away from others as much as possible if you are sick.
- Stay informed about pandemic influenza and be prepared to respond:
  - ▶ Consult [www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov) frequently for updates on state, national and international information on pandemic influenza.
  - ▶ Listen to radio and television and read news stories about pandemic flu.