# PREPARATION AND PREVENTION

### How can individuals and families prepare for pandemic flu?

The first step to pandemic preparation involves thinking about how a pandemic may affect your daily life. Talking with neighbors, planning with your family and community, and creating an emergency kit are pandemic planning efforts that will be useful in preparing for and responding to a variety of emergencies, such as natural disasters. Workers should ask their employers about their pandemic plans—including policies about sick leave and working from home. Getting in the habit of practicing good personal health habits—such as washing your hands regularly, and staying home when you are sick—will help limit the spread of the virus should a pandemic happen.

Many of the steps you should take to prepare for a pandemic can also be used for a lot of other emergencies. As with any emergency planning, people should have items such as medical and contact information, water, non-perishable food, first-aid kit, a portable radio, and batteries on hand.

## What can businesses do to prepare for a pandemic?

Businesses should plan for ways to stay open and running in case employees—possibly up to 40 percent—are absent due to illness or having to care for their family members. Businesses can help protect employees by giving the most current information about pandemic, as well as having personal hygiene materials—tissues and hand sanitizers—readily available. Businesses can also protect their employees by frequently washing common surfaces and having fewer in-person meetings.

## What can communities do to prepare for a pandemic?

Communities can prepare by working together to plan for the disruptions a pandemic could cause, such as school and business closings. Communities should also determine which residents, such as older adults and those with special disabilities, will need help before, during, and after a pandemic.

# What is Wisconsin doing to prepare for a pandemic?

Wisconsin is preparing for a pandemic by:

- Monitoring for changes in current flu viruses that can cause pandemic influenza.
- Increasing the state's supply of antiviral medicines.
- Working with health care facilities to increase their ability to care for a larger number of patients.
- Educating residents about pandemic flu.

### What can I do to protect myself against pandemic flu?

There are some things everyone can do to help prevent the spread of any illness, including pandemic influenza:

- Be alert for symptoms of the flu which can include sudden fever, chills, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Symptoms usually last for several days or more, and do not typically include vomiting, diarrhea, or muscle cramps.
- Stay at home from school or work if you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with others who are sick with a flu-like illness.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your upper arm; then wash your hands. If you use a tissue, throw it away after one use—do not reuse it.
- Clean your hands often with soap and water, especially after visiting the rest room.
  If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based, waterless hand sanitizer.
- Frequently clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces such as doorknobs, refrigerator handles, phones, and water faucets.
- It is always a good idea to follow good health habits such as eating well, exercising, not smoking, and getting enough rest.

### What steps may be taken to protect the public during a pandemic?

Schools may be closed and large public gatherings, such as sporting events, may be canceled. There may also be restrictions on travel. Health officials may use public health measures such as isolating sick people and quarantining people who may have been exposed to the influenza virus.

#### What is isolation?

Isolation is keeping people who are infected with a highly contagious disease away from others. This is a public health measure that is used to help prevent the spread of a disease.

#### What is quarantine?

Quarantine separates people who may have been in contact with the virus, but are not sick yet, from contact with other people. This is a public health measure that is used to help prevent the spread of a disease.

#### Why would there be travel limitations during a pandemic flu?

Government officials could place restrictions on travel to prevent pandemic flu from further spreading across states and countries.