How Can You Prepare?

Make a Kit

To make it easier to care for loved ones at home, have some extra food, water, and other liquids in the house. Try to keep enough to last for at least two weeks. Your kit should provide the basics to help you and your family if you cannot leave your home for several days:

- ☐ Food
- ☐ Water and other liquids
- ☐ Infant formula and diapers if you have a baby
- ☐ First aid kit, including a thermometer, pain relievers, and decongestants
- ☐ Copies of important documents (such as birth certificates, naturalization documents, licenses, passports, health insurance cards) in a waterproof container
- ☐ A list of medical conditions, prescriptions, and allergies for all household members and some extra of any medication you use every day
- ☐ Supplies and equipment for household members with special needs
- ☐ Pet supplies (including food and water, leashes, carriers, and records of shots)

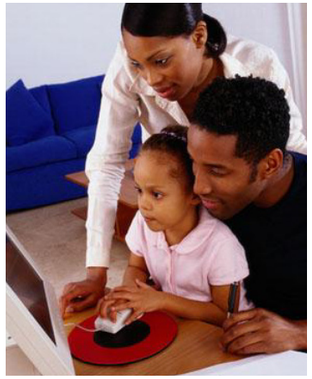
For most other emergencies, also include:

- ☐ Battery operated radio and flashlight, with extra batteries
- ☐ Small tools (utility knife, pliers, can opener)
- ☐ Extra blankets and extra clothes

Make a Plan

- ☐ In a pandemic, many people could be sick at the same time. Worksites, schools, and day care centers may close.
- ☐ Plan how you would manage if there were big changes in your daily life.
- ☐ Help elderly neighbors and people with special needs.

Stay Informed



- ☐ Listen to, watch, and read the news.
- ☐ Ask for information from community leaders.
- ☐ Follow directions from health officials.
- ☐ Go to
  www.pandemicflu.gov
  www.avianflu.gov
  www.health.ri.gov
- ☐ Call the Family Health Information Line at 1-800-942-7434.

What Is Rhode Island Doing to Prepare for a Pandemic?

Governor Donald L. Carcieri has asked David R. Gifford, MD, MPH, Director of Health, to coordinate Rhode Island's preparation and response to a pandemic influenza outbreak. There is a Pandemic Influenza Advisory Committee that is made up of many state agencies, city and town officials, hospitals, health care providers, businesses, industries, and community leaders. This group is working together to help all of us try to keep our lives as normal as possible during an influenza pandemic.

Rhode Island Is:

- ☐ Making plans to stockpile antiviral medication and distribute vaccines if they become available.
- ☐ Working with hospitals and clinics to plan for a larger number of patients than they usually have.
- ☐ Helping state agencies, cities, towns, businesses, and industries prepare to keep their most important operations going.
- ☐ Planning to make sure that essential supplies are available in the state.
- ☐ Planning to make sure that Rhode Islanders get the information they need, as soon as we have it.

To Stay Informed:

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Rhode Island Department of Health

Pandemic Influenza:
What you can do to prepare

MAKE A KIT
MAKE A PLAN
STAY INFORMED

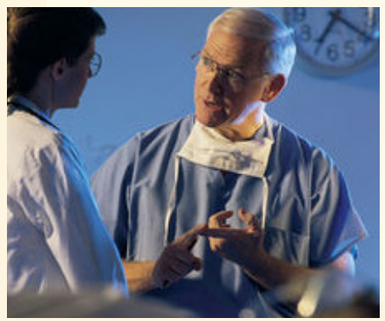
There is no influenza pandemic now, but we need to be prepared.

Go to **www.health.ri.gov** or call the Family Health Information Line at **1-800-942-7434**.

Why worry about pandemic influenza?

During a pandemic influenza outbreak:

- Many people will need medical care.
- At the same time, many people, including health care workers, may be out of work because they may be sick, or taking care of loved ones who are sick.
- The federal government is working on ways to produce vaccines more quickly, but we will not have an effective vaccine when a pandemic starts.
- Existing medication to treat pandemic influenza may not be effective.



Influenza Signs/Symptoms

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Feeling very tired
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Stomach symptoms such as, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea

People with influenza should:

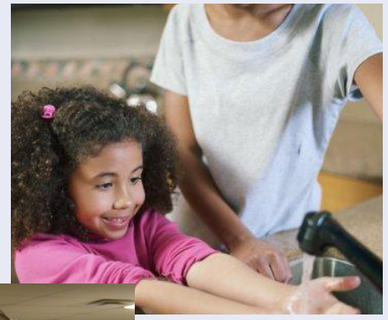
- Stay home and get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of liquids
- Take medicine to relieve fever and body aches

How Influenza Spreads

- Influenza viruses spread from person to person in tiny droplets when people sneeze or cough.
- People can get infected by touching something that has been contaminated with the virus and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.
- People may be able to infect others up to two days before they show signs or symptoms, and up to five days after they become sick.

How to Avoid Getting Influenza

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based gels.
- Try to avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Stay at home when you are sick, and try to stay away from others to avoid spreading the virus.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, unless you know that your hands are clean.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.
- Sneeze into your sleeve or into a tissue. If you use a tissue, throw it away in the trash right after using it, then wash your hands.
- Get a flu shot every year, and talk to your doctor about getting a pneumonia shot.



SEASONAL (OR COMMON) FLU is a respiratory illness that can be spread from person to person. Most people have some immunity (defenses) against it, and there is a vaccine that can protect people from getting it.

AVIAN INFLUENZA OR "BIRD" FLU is caused by many types of influenza viruses that exist naturally among wild birds. The H5N1 strain is one of these viruses, and it is very deadly to poultry and some waterfowl. Over 250 people worldwide have been infected by such birds, primarily by poultry, but so far the H5N1 virus cannot be spread easily from person to person.

For more information about avian influenza, call the RI Department of Environmental Management's Bird Flu Line at 401-222-4080.

A PANDEMIC OF INFLUENZA is a worldwide outbreak of influenza caused by a virus that is new to humans. This new virus could come from birds, or from another type of animal. Because the virus would be new or very different from any virus seen before, humans would have no natural immunity (defenses) against it. The disease would spread easily from person to person. In a pandemic, many people may get sick at the same time, and many may die.