

Facts about an Influenza Pandemic

Influenza pandemics occur when all four of the following occur:

1. A new influenza A virus is detected.
2. Human-to human transmission happens easily.
3. The new virus causes serious illness and death.
4. The population has little or no immunity to the virus.

Influenza Pandemic

- Occurs when a new “flu” virus appears that the population has no immunity to it.
- Occurs every few decades and spreads rapidly around the world.
- Can occur at any time.
- The flu causes severe illness and life-threatening complications in many people.
- The influenza virus is divided into three groups: A, B & C. Type C rarely causes human illness. Only type A is known to cause pandemics.
- Affects approximately a quarter more of the population and has higher rates of illness and death.
- Symptoms are more severe than annual flu and all age groups may be at risk of infection.
- A vaccine against pandemic flu will not be available at the start of a pandemic. It takes up to 6 months for a vaccine to be developed.
- Outbreaks of influenza in animals, especially when they occur with outbreaks in humans, increase the chances of a pandemic through the merging of animal and human influenza viruses to create a new virus, which affects humans.

Annual Influenza

- Occurs every year during the winter months of October to April.
- Most people recover from annual influenza within 1 to 2 weeks without medical treatment.
- In the U.S., 5-20% of the population gets the flu each year and 36,000-40,000 die.
- Worldwide, 500,000 to 1 million deaths occur each year due to flu.
- Most deaths occur in at risk groups:
 - ✓ People over 65 years of age
 - ✓ People with other medical conditions such as lung disease, diabetes, cancer, heart problems, etc.
 - ✓ People with compromised immune systems
 - ✓ Children less than 2 years old
- Annual flu shots are very effective in preventing and/or reducing the symptoms of influenza.

Influenza Symptoms

Influenza is caused by a flu virus which infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). It usually starts suddenly and may include these symptoms:

- Fever
- Muscle pain and weakness
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose

For more information visit our website
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