

Pandemic Influenza

Differences Between Seasonal Flu and Pandemic Flu



How Does Seasonal Flu Differ From Pandemic Flu?

Pandemic flu should not be confused with seasonal flu. Learn the differences.

Seasonal Flu

Caused by influenza viruses that are similar to those already affecting people.

Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose and muscle pain. Deaths can be caused by complications, such as pneumonia.

Healthy adults usually are not at risk for serious complications. The very young, the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk for serious complications.

Every year in the United State, on average:

- 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu;
- More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications; and
- About 36,000 people die from flu.

Pandemic Flu

Caused by a new influenza virus that people have not been exposed to before. Likely to be more severe, affect more people and cause more deaths than seasonal flu because people will not have immunity to the new virus.

Symptoms similar to the common flu may be more severe and complications more serious.

Healthy adults may be at increased risk for serious complications.

The effects of a severe pandemic could be much more damaging than those of a regular flu season. It could lead to high levels of illness, death, social disruption and economic loss. Everyday life could be disrupted because so many people in so many places become seriously ill at the same time. Impacts could range from school and business closings to the interruption of basic services, such as public transportation and food delivery.