

Influenza

Seasonal Flu versus Pandemic Flu



There are a number of key characteristics which experts look for when deciding whether or not a particular flu virus is a potential pandemic threat. For an influenza virus to be capable of causing a pandemic, it must be able to infect people, not just mammals and birds, and cause illness in a high proportion of those infected. It must be able to spread easily and widely from person to person; because the virus is significantly different and new, most people have little or no immunity to it. All previous flu pandemics have exhibited these characteristics.

PANDEMIC FLU	SEASONAL FLU
Rarely happens (four times since 1918)	Happens <u>annually</u> and usually peaks in January or February
People have little or no immunity because they have no previous exposure to the virus	Usually some immunity built up from previous exposure
Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications	Usually only <u>people at high risk</u> , not healthy adults, are at risk of serious complications
Health care providers and hospitals may be overwhelmed, have shortages in staff or medicines	Health care providers and hospitals can usually meet public and patient needs
Vaccine probably would <u>not</u> be available in the early stages of a pandemic	Vaccine available for annual flu season
Effective <u>antivirals</u> may be in limited supply	Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available
Number of deaths could be high. The U.S. death toll during the <u>1918 Pandemic</u> was approximately 675,000	<u>Seasonal flu-associated deaths</u> in the US average about 36,000 annually
Symptoms may be more severe such as: severe pneumonia or acute respiratory distress	<u>Symptoms</u> include fever, cough, runny nose, and muscle pain
May cause major impact on the general public, such as widespread travel restrictions and school or business closings	Usually causes minor impact on the general public, some schools may close and sick people are encouraged to stay home: social distancing
Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy	Manageable impact on domestic and world economy



For more sources of information on this topic visit:
 ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co
 MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES www.michigan.gov/mdhhs
 CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION www.cdc.gov