



HISTORY AND IMPACT

Have flu pandemics happened before?

Yes, flu pandemics have happened before, including three during the 1900s.

Are scientists sure that a pandemic will happen again?

Because flu viruses are always changing, scientists are positive that another flu pandemic will happen, although they cannot say for sure when.

How severe will a pandemic be?

No one can really tell how severe a pandemic will be. It depends on the exact strain of the virus and how much can be done to prevent the spread of the disease.

How would a flu pandemic affect me and my family?

A flu pandemic may cause communities to take public health measures to prevent the spread of the virus. These measures can include closing schools and some businesses, and placing limits on travel and large public gatherings.

How would pandemic flu affect communities and businesses?

Communities can expect that health and government officials may decide to limit large public gatherings in order to prevent further spread of the virus. Businesses should plan for up to 40 percent of their workforce being absent due to sickness or having to care for family members.

How would a pandemic affect schools?

Health and school officials may decide to close schools in order to prevent further spread of the virus.

How would a pandemic affect hospitals?

Hospitals and other healthcare centers may be overwhelmed with patients. There may not be enough supplies and medications on hand. Some healthcare workers may be absent due to sickness or having to care for family members.

How many people can be expected to get sick during a flu pandemic?

The amount of people who will get sick during the next flu pandemic cannot be predicted. It depends on the severity of the virus, how fast it spreads, and what public health measures are used.

How many people can be expected to die during a flu pandemic?

The death toll for the next pandemic cannot be predicted. Previous pandemics have ranged from mild (death tolls are similar to deaths from seasonal flu) to severe (such as the 1918-1919 Spanish Influenza pandemic, which killed millions around the world). Wisconsin health departments, and public health officials throughout the U.S., are focusing efforts on ways to detect the virus early and prevent the spread of the disease, which will help to limit the number of those exposed.

For More Information, contact: Wood County Health Department
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Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services
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