

# Pandemic influenza (flu)

## Information for people who may have been exposed to pandemic influenza and are isolated

### What is pandemic influenza?

Pandemic influenza is a human disease caused by a completely new influenza virus. The virus is different to the seasonal influenza virus that normally affects humans, and may cause infection in many people because almost no one will be immune to it.

### How is pandemic influenza spread?

Pandemic influenza can spread from human to human through being in close contact with an infected person while they are talking, coughing or sneezing. Touching contaminated surfaces then putting your fingers in your eyes, nose or mouth may also place you at risk.

### Symptoms in humans

The incubation period (the time from exposure until symptoms develop) is unknown, but is likely to be up to seven days. Symptoms of pandemic influenza in humans include fever and cough, severe fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose, muscle/joint aches, and shortness of breath. People may also have diarrhoea and red, sore eyes with fever and feeling unwell.

### Is there any risk to my family and friends?

The risk of spread from infected people is quite high. If you have been exposed and become unwell, people who have been in close contact with you will be assessed, monitored and, if necessary, given antiviral medication.

### Is it likely that I will become unwell?

Good hygiene, such as washing your hands regularly, helps to reduce your risk of infection. Make sure you wash your hands thoroughly after any contact with sick people or surfaces or items that they may have contaminated. It's a good idea to avoid contact with people who are sick as much as possible.

### Precautions to take if you have been in contact with pandemic influenza

- Check your temperature daily for seven days after your last exposure to pandemic influenza (see last page for instructions on taking your temperature).
- If you have been advised to take anti-influenza medication, take the medication daily for seven days after your last exposure to pandemic influenza.

- If you become unwell with the symptoms of pandemic influenza described earlier, contact the Department of Human Services on 1300 651 160.

### What about antiviral medications?

Antiviral medications may reduce the risk of becoming unwell if you are exposed to the virus, especially if taken very soon after exposure. You may have been advised to take these medications by a public health officer.

## Advice for people under surveillance for pandemic influenza

### What does being 'under surveillance' mean?

If you have been exposed to pandemic influenza you may be at risk of getting the disease. Your health must be closely monitored until the risk period is over. You need to be in daily contact with the Department of Human Services and will be asked questions about your health. Even if you remain free of symptoms, you need to be isolated from the community. You should remain at home and keep away from people who are sick, until the department advises you that it is safe for you to resume your normal activities. You will be asked to inform your GP as a matter of courtesy, but there is no need for a doctor to visit unless you become unwell.

### What do I have to do?

You need to monitor your health for seven days after you were last exposed to pandemic influenza. You must:

- Measure your body temperature every morning at 10:00 am, and at other times during the day if you feel that you may have a fever (chills or severe sweats) and record it in the table provided below.
- Watch out for any symptoms of influenza, and use the table below to record new symptoms, if any, daily.

### If you do develop a fever of 38°C or higher or develop any symptoms of influenza, you should:

- Seek medical attention soon. Contact your GP or local hospital (phone ahead first).
- Contact the Department of Human Services on 1300 651 160.
- Try to stay away from other people.
- Make sure all other household members continue very good hygiene practices.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands, and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and running water for 15 seconds, especially after contact with secretions from your nose and mouth (for example, after blowing your nose, or coughing or sneezing), before eating, or after using the toilet.

Date of last influenza exposure: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Monitor health daily until: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ (7 days after last exposure)

### Table for recording temperature and symptoms

Day	Date	Time temperature taken	Temperature	Symptoms, if any
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

### How to record your body temperature (follow these instructions carefully)

To ensure accurate measurement of your temperature, **do not** take your temperature for 30 minutes after having a hot or cold drink, having a hot shower or bath, exercising or smoking. Take your temperature before taking medications that lower your temperature (e.g., aspirin, ibuprofen, and paracetamol-containing drugs such as Panadol, Panamax, Panadeine and Dymadon). If you have taken any of these medications, wait for six hours after taking these medications before taking your temperature.

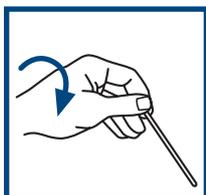
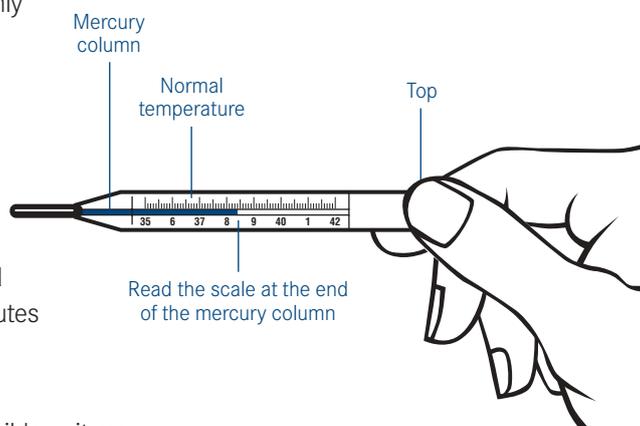
### Using a digital thermometer: (see picture)

- Press on/off button.
- Wait until thermometer resets and beeps.
- Place tip of the thermometer under the tongue or in the ear (according to the type).
- Wait until the thermometer beeps.
- Record the temperature and the time it was taken.
- Consult the manufacturer's instructions for advice on cleaning the digital thermometer.

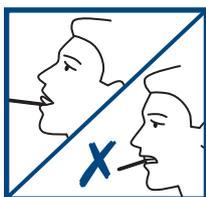


### Using a mercury thermometer: (see picture)

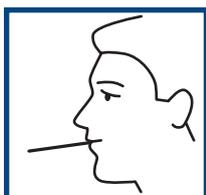
- Hold the thermometer firmly by the top and shake downwards firmly.
- Shake the thermometer until the mercury level falls below 35°C.
- Place the thermometer bulb under the tongue and leave in place for four minutes (monitor with a clock).
- Do not bite or knock the thermometer. For some children, it may be easier and safer to place the thermometer under their arm, rather than in the mouth.
- Record the temperature and the time it was taken.
- Wash the thermometer with soap and water after use.



Shake the thermometer.



Place carefully under tongue. Do not bite down.



Keep lips closed and thermometer in place for approximately 4 minutes.