



PANDEMIC FLU

HOW DOES SEASONAL FLU DIFFER FROM PANDEMIC FLU?

SEASONAL FLU

Occurs annually, usually in winter.

Usually some immunity from previous exposure.

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

Health systems usually can meet public and patient needs.

Vaccine developed based on known virus strains and available for annual flu season.

Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available.

Average U.S. deaths approximately 36,000/yr.

Symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain. Deaths often caused by complications, such as pneumonia.

Generally causes modest impact on society (e.g., some school closing, encouragement of people who are sick to stay home).

Manageable impact on domestic and world economy.

PANDEMIC FLU

Occurs occasionally (last pandemic in 1968).

No previous exposure; little or no immunity.

Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications.

Public and patient needs may exceed the capacity of health systems to provide care.

Vaccine probably would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic.

Effective antivirals may be in limited supply.

Number of deaths could be quite high (e.g., U.S. 1918 death toll about 500,000).

Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent.

May cause major impact on society (e.g., widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellation of large public gatherings)

Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy.

For additional information, visit www.pandemicflu.gov.

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