Differences between **seasonal flu** and **pandemic flu:**

Seasonal Flu

THE VIRUS

- Caused by influenza viruses that are closely related to viruses that have previously circulated; most people will have some immunity to it.
- Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and muscle pain.
- Complications such as pneumonia are most common in the very young and very old and may result in death.
- Vaccine is produced each season to protect people from the three influenza strains predicted to be most likely to cause illness.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

- Seasonal flu kills about 36,000 Americans each year and hospitalizes more than 200,000 children and adults.

Mild to Moderate Pandemic

THE VIRUS

- Caused by a new influenza virus that has not previously circulated among people and that can be easily spread.
- Because most people will have no immunity to the new virus, it will likely cause illness in high numbers of people and more severe illness and deaths than seasonal influenza.
- Symptoms are similar to seasonal flu, but may be more severe and have more frequent serious complications.
- Healthy adults may be at increased risk for serious complications.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

- May cause a moderate impact on society (e.g., some short-term school closings, encouragement of people who are sick to stay home).

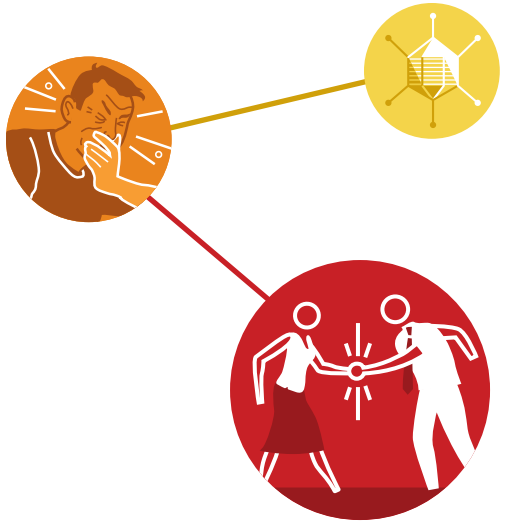
Severe Pandemic

THE VIRUS

- A severe strain causes more severe illness, results in greater loss of life, and has a greater impact on society.
- During the peak of a severe pandemic, workplace absenteeism could reach up to 40% due to people being ill themselves or caring for family members.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

- Schools and day care/child care facilities may be closed.
- Public and social gatherings will be discouraged.
- The patterns of daily life could be changed for some time with basic services and access to supplies possibly disrupted.



How does influenza spread?

Human influenza virus is mainly transmitted from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A lesser mode of transmission occurs when a person touches something that has the flu viruses on it and then touches his or her mouth or nose. Some individuals who are infected may never show symptoms or have mild symptoms, but could still spread the virus to others.

When a pandemic begins, a virus-specific vaccine may not be available until 4-6 months after identification of a pandemic virus.

The supply of antiviral drugs will likely be limited throughout the pandemic. Moreover, scientists cannot be certain that antiviral drugs will be effective against a pandemic virus. For these reasons, infection control and social distancing measures will be the keys to limiting transmission, delaying the spread of the virus, and protecting people. Social distancing is a measure to decrease the frequency of contact among people in order to diminish the risk of spread of communicable diseases.