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**Pandemic Preparedness
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What is a Pandemic?

A pandemic is an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population. Worldwide spread of the new virus, illness resulting in death, and sustained person-to-person spread have to be met in order for an emerging infectious disease to be considered a pandemic.

Before a Pandemic

Make a preparedness plan for you and your family by thinking about the ways our lives can be disrupted if public health measures are put in place. Consider the following:

- Discuss with your employer if telecommuting options are available. Can you work from home? Be knowledgeable about sick leave and absence policies.
- If you have children, how would you handle an extended period of school or day care closure? What plans do your schools have?

Things to start considering in the event you become ill and movement is restricted:

- Store a two-week supply of water and food.
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Get copies and maintain electronic versions of health records from doctors, hospitals, pharmacies and other sources and store them, for personal reference.
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.

During a Pandemic

Here are measures you can take to limit the spread of germs and prevent infection:

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- When you are sick, **keep your distance** from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- **Washing your hands** often will help protect you from germs.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

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