

DISEASE OUTBREAKS

PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMICS AND PANDEMICS

LEARN THE BASICS ABOUT THE SPREAD OF
INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO
PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR
COMMUNITY.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

OUTBREAK: WHEN A DISEASE OCCURS IN GREATER NUMBERS THAN EXPECTED IN A COMMUNITY, REGION OR DURING A SEASON, IT IS CALLED AN OUTBREAK.

EPIDEMIC: WHEN AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE SPREADS RAPIDLY TO MANY PEOPLE.

FOR EXAMPLE, A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ARE EXPECTED TO “CATCH” THE FLU EACH YEAR. IN RESPONSE TO THIS EXPECTATION, VACCINES ARE ORDERED AND STOCKPILED BY PHARMACIES, CLINICS, AND HOSPITALS. HOWEVER, WHEN THE NUMBER OF CASES PROPEL TO AN UNEXPECTED OR UNPREDICTABLE LEVEL, IT IS THEN CONSIDERED AN EPIDEMIC.

A PANDEMIC IS A GLOBAL DISEASE OUTBREAK.

The best thing you can do to be prepared for an epidemic or pandemic is to stay alert and informed. Pay attention to press releases and interviews when physicians or health district officials are involved.

The following tips may also help you to be prepared:

- * Follow directions from public health and emergency management officials.**
- * Wash your hands regularly. Germs are spread through interactions with other people and surfaces. Clean hands helps to prevent spreading.**
- * Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing. Many illnesses are air-borne, meaning they can be spread through the air by coughing and sneezing.**
- * If you are sick, do not go to school or work. Containing the illness is the first step to preventing its spread.**

FLU FACTS

THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT STEP IN PREVENTING FLU IS TO GET A FLU VACCINATION EACH YEAR. CDC ALSO RECOMMENDS EVERYDAY PREVENTIVE ACTIONS TO HELP SLOW THE SPREAD OF GERMS THAT CAUSE RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES, LIKE FLU:

- * STAYING AWAY FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK,
- * COVERING COUGHS AND SNEEZES,
- * FREQUENT HANDWASHING

THE FLU IS A HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS RESPIRATORY ILLNESS CAUSED BY INFLUENZA VIRUSES THAT INFECT THE NOSE, THROAT, AND LUNGS. IT CAN CAUSE MILD TO SEVERE ILLNESS, AND AT TIMES CAN LEAD TO DEATH.

MOST VIRUSES ARE SPREAD THROUGH THE AIR IN SNEEZES, COUGHS, OR EVEN BREATHS. GERMS CAN ALSO SPREAD IN SWEAT, SALIVA, AND BLOOD.

THESE DROPLETS CAN LAND IN THE MOUTHS OR NOSES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE NEARBY. LESS OFTEN, A PERSON MIGHT ALSO GET FLU BY TOUCHING A SURFACE OR OBJECT THAT HAS FLU VIRUS ON IT AND THEN TOUCHING THEIR OWN MOUTH, EYES OR POSSIBLY THEIR NOSE.

MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS ARE CHILLS, FEVER, RUNNY NOSE, SORE THROAT, MUSCLE PAINS, HEADACHE (OFTEN SEVERE), COUGHING, WEAKNESS/FATIGUE AND GENERAL DISCOMFORT.