ABOUT PANDEMIC FLU
How is pandemic flu different from seasonal flu?

- **Seasonal flu** is caused by viruses that have previously circulated.
- Symptoms include:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Fatigue
  - Runny Nose
  - Muscle Pain
- A vaccine is produced each season to protect people from the three influenza strains predicted to cause illness.
- Complications such as pneumonia are most common in the very young and very old and may result in death.
  - ~36,000 Americans die each year
  - ~200,000 hospitalized.
How is pandemic flu different from seasonal flu? (continued)

**Pandemic flu** is caused by a new influenza virus that has not previously circulated among people and that can be easily spread.

- Symptoms are similar to seasonal flu, but may be more severe and have more frequent serious complications.
- Because this is a new virus, people will not have immunity to it. It will likely cause illness in high numbers of people and more severe illness and deaths than seasonal influenza.
- Healthy adults may be at increased risk for serious complications.
Severe Pandemics

- When severe pandemic is at its peak:
  - School absenteeism could reach up to 40%.
  - Schools and daycare facilities may be closed.
  - Public and social gatherings may be cancelled or discouraged.
  - Patterns of daily life could be changed at some given point.
Signs of Illness

- Coughing
- Fever or Chills
- Sore throat and trouble swallowing
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Sneezing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Breathing troubles
- Unusual spots or rashes
How Germs Spread

• “Droplet spread”: The main way illnesses like colds and flu spread from person to person.
  • Occurs when a person touches the respiratory droplets left by another person’s coughs and sneezes on surfaces like desks, then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.
  • Some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, pencils, desks, etc. So…
Learn Your Respiratory Etiquette

• Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
• Cough into a tissue and throw it away immediately.
• Wash your hands often.
  • Wash with soap and warm water for 15 to 20 seconds, or about the same time it takes to say your ABCs.
HOW TO PREPARE
Steps to prepare for the pandemic flu:

- Create a Pandemic Flu Plan
- Work with local and state public health and emergency preparedness officials
- Decide:
  - the roles and responsibilities of school staff (including all ancillary staff) in preventing spread of flu
  - whether your schools should be cleaned differently or more frequently
  - to what degree you will encourage students as well as staff to stay home when they are mildly ill
Steps to prepare for the pandemic flu (continued):

• Educate:
  • students and staff about *respiratory etiquette*
  • school nurses and staff about how to recognize flu symptoms. Remember that:
    • a person infected may not show symptoms right away.
    • children who are getting ill may show different behavior than usual, such as eating less or being irritable.
  • staff, parents and students about the differences between seasonal flu, avian (bird) flu and pandemic flu
Steps to prepare for the pandemic flu (continued):

• Identify:
  • students and staff most vulnerable to illness (those with chronic illness, the immuno-suppressed, etc.)
  • Parents should be more cautious and careful in keeping these children at home.
WHAT TO TELL STUDENTS’ FAMILIES
Communication Plans

• How will information be distributed throughout the school community?
  • Through backpack mailings
  • Newsletters and email lists
  • Video
  • Local TV and Radio Stations
  • School Emergency Telephone Hot Lines
What to tell students’ families

- NEVER send sick children to school.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- Teach your children proper hand washing by setting a good example
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of child if sick.
What to tell students’ families (continued)

- Also, have the following items on hand in case of extended stay at home:
  - **Non-Perishable Foods**
    - Ready to eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, soups
    - Protein or fruit bars
    - Dry cereal or granola
    - Peanut butter and jelly
    - Dried fruit, nuts, trail mix
    - Crackers
    - Canned juices
    - Bottled water
    - Canned or jarred baby food
    - Don’t forget food for your pets!
What to tell students’ families (continued)

• Emergency Medical and Health Supplies
  • Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment
  • Soap and water or alcohol-based hand wash
  • Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
  • Thermometer
  • Portable Radio
  • Vitamins
  • Fluids with electrolytes
  • Flashlight with extra batteries
  • Manual can opener
  • Garbage bags
  • Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers
And finally…

FEVER ALERT!!!

In case of fever, children should stay home until resolved for 24 hours.
Questions or Feedback

- Contact your local Health Department
- Contact the State Office of Citizen Services
- [www.dhhs.state.nc.us/ocs/](http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/ocs/)
Other Resources

State
www.dhhs.state.nc.us
http://www.ncpanflu.gov/

Federal
www.ed.gov
www.pandemicflu.gov
www.healthinschools.org/sh/influenza.asp

International
World health Organization (WHO)
www.who.int