

Chart of Public Health Measures Against Pandemic Influenza for Individuals, Health Care Providers, and Organizations

The measures in the chart below may be important to reduce transmission of pandemic influenza in VA facilities and other settings.

Who Can Act?	What Public Health Measures?	Why?
Individuals	Cleaning hands regularly.	Reduces transfer of microorganisms from the hands to the eyes, nose, or mouth. Reduces transmission of microorganisms carried on hands from person to person.
	Following respiratory hygiene rules (covering the mouth and nose with tissues when coughing or sneezing).	Prevents dispersal of respiratory viruses in the air.
	Getting seasonal influenza vaccinations.	Prevents individuals from getting/transmitting seasonal influenza, which reduces burden on health care system, and keeps the individual well and able to conduct daily business. Reduces likelihood of genetic re-assortment of influenza strains when a person is infected with more than one strain. Helps people become accustomed to getting vaccinations.
	Avoiding contact with sick persons—staying at least three to five feet away.	Reduces likelihood of one’s getting and transmitting influenza.
	Staying home when sick—from work, school, public places	Reduces transmission of influenza to other persons.
	Wearing masks when sick with influenza, if able to tolerate.	Reduces transmission to others.
Who Can Act?	What Public Health Measures?	Why?
Health care providers	Tracing contacts.	Locates and allows potentially exposed persons to be informed and able to take measures to avoid exposing others.
	Isolating people with suspected or confirmed influenza.	Reduces transmission of influenza to others.
	Quarantining people exposed to influenza.	Reduces transmission of influenza to other persons. Because the incubation period of influenza is about 2 days, quarantine time would also be short (actual time will be determined by the characteristics of the pandemic influenza virus).

Who Can Act?	What Public Health Measures?	Why?
	Wearing personal protective equipment—masks or respirators, gowns, gloves, goggles.	Reduces risk of getting influenza and potential of transmitting it to others.
Business, community, regional, and national organizations and leaders	Developing, manufacturing, stockpiling, and distributing antiviral medications.	Treats influenza or prevents its spread.
	Developing, manufacturing, stockpiling, and distributing vaccine.	Prevents influenza
	Reducing non-essential travel.	Reduces the number of persons an individual has contact with and slows the spread of influenza from region to region.
	Closing schools.	Children usually have many more close contacts than adults; closing schools greatly reduces transmission of influenza within schools, within families, and within communities.
	Declaring “snow days” (temporarily closing businesses, offices), postponing public gatherings	Reduces contacts among persons; has potential to reduce transmission
	Enabling employees to work from home; making teleworking/telecommuting possible.	Reduces contacts among persons; has potential to reduce transmission
	Partitioning space.	Limiting access to a building or facility by screening those who enter for fever, respiratory symptoms, and possible recent exposure.

Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards (13)
Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420 - (202) 273-8567 - <http://www.publichealth.va.gov>