## Seasonal Flu

- Getting a flu shot or the nasal spray each year is the best way to protect yourself from seasonal flu.
- Outbreaks occur each year, mostly in the winter.
- The viruses that cause seasonal flu are like the ones from the past few years. That’s why many people can fight off the illness.
- Not all people who get sick will need to go to the hospital, so there is space for those who are really sick.
- Healthy adults usually don’t get very sick. The very young, the elderly, and people with chronic health problems could get extremely ill.
- A flu vaccine (flu shot or nasal spray) is made each year to prevent the spread of seasonal flu.
- A person can start to spread seasonal flu to others about 1 day before they feel sick, and up to 5 days after becoming sick.

## Pandemic Flu

- Happens when a new flu virus spreads to people all over the world.
- Because the virus is new, many more people are likely to get sick after being exposed.
- So many people will get sick that hospitals and health care providers may not be able to handle all the people who need care.
- People of any age and even healthy people could get very ill.
- A vaccine for pandemic flu may not be available when pandemic flu first breaks out. It may take 4 to 6 months to make the first doses of pandemic-specific vaccine.
- No one knows for sure how fast pandemic flu will make a person sick or spread to others.

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Stay home when sick • Clean your hands
Cover your coughs and sneezes

www.publichealth.va.gov/InfectionDontPassItOn