

*Bird Flu. Pandemic Flu. You've probably heard these terms in the news, and you may have questions and concerns. That is why we created this informational pamphlet.*



*Pandemics have occurred before and experts believe they will happen again. Unfortunately, it is simply not possible to predict "if or when" a flu pandemic will occur, so the best we can do is prepare.*

*Monroe County has been working closely with our private and public partners to develop and test plans so we respond effectively. As a resident, it is essential that you have a basic understanding of this issue so you will be familiar with actions we may ask you to take in such an event.*

*This pamphlet is designed to provide you with basic information. We have also created a section on our Web site, [monroecounty.gov](http://monroecounty.gov), that provides detailed information, including a short video that answers the most common questions. Please visit our site often for updates on this important subject.*

*Our community is nationally recognized for our leadership in emergency preparedness. Certainly, we all hope we never have to face such a health emergency. But, I assure you that if our community ever does encounter pandemic flu, we will respond with a clear, concise and effective plan.*

*Your understanding of this subject, and cooperation with recommendations from health and public safety officials, will go far to protect your health and the health of your family.*

*Maggie Brooks*

Maggie Brooks  
County Executive

## WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT PANDEMIC FLU?

### Pandemic flu strikes quickly and spreads fast

- Pandemic flu can be highly contagious, spreading rapidly from person to person. Many people would get sick, some could die.
- Healthcare services would be in demand, but providers might be in short supply.
- Pandemic flu could severely disrupt everyday life.

### Medical supplies would be limited

Although the federal government stocks medicines, vaccines and medical equipment, they would be in short supply. People who perform essential services would likely receive medications and vaccine first so they could stay healthy and provide care for others.

### Isolation might be required

Isolation (separating people from others) might be used to protect the public during a pandemic. It's likely that schools and some businesses would close and public events would be cancelled.

Health officials might ask people to stay home.

## WHY IS PANDEMIC FLU MORE SERIOUS THAN SEASONAL FLU?

Pandemic flu is not the same as seasonal flu. Here's the difference:

### Seasonal (or common) flu

- Occurs every year during the winter.
- Affects 5-20% of the population.
- Most people have some immunity.
- For most people it is unpleasant but not life-threatening.

- People who are very young, very old, and/or have certain chronic illnesses are most at risk of serious illness.
- A vaccine is usually available.
- Antiviral drugs help treat those at risk and those who are sick.

### Pandemic flu

- Can occur any time of the year. Has occurred three times in the last 90 years.
- May affect 30% or more of the population.
- People have little or no natural immunity.
- Is often life-threatening.
- Everyone could be at risk of serious illness.
- A vaccine is currently not available.
- Antiviral drugs are likely to be in limited supply during a pandemic.

Vaccine against seasonal flu will not protect against pandemic flu. However, getting your yearly flu shot is one of several things you can do to keep yourself healthy, and that may help you fight off a pandemic flu virus.

## HOW IS MONROE COUNTY PREPARING?

The Monroe County Health Department is working with our area hospitals, physicians, local businesses, schools and other private and public partners to develop a pandemic flu response plan. The plan outlines our community's response to a pandemic along with guidelines for distributing vaccine and antiviral medication.

## BE AWARE. PREPARE.

Pandemic flu can spread quickly and can be life-threatening to people of all ages. You should be aware of the risks and what you can do to best care for yourself and your family.

- Be informed. Pay attention to pandemic flu news. Review the County Web site's PanFlu page at [monroecounty.gov](http://monroecounty.gov)
- Follow advice from health officials.
- Stay up-to-date on all your immunizations, especially flu and pneumonia shots.

## HAVE A FAMILY PLAN

- Talk with family and relatives about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what's needed to care for them at home.
- Talk with your doctor about getting an extra supply of your regular prescription drugs.
- Have non-prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, such as pain relievers, cough and cold medicines.
- Have an extra supply of food and water.
- In a pandemic, many people may get sick at the same time, so think about how you will manage if everyday life is severely disrupted.
- Discuss and practice general protection measures:
  - Cover cough, wash hands, stay home when sick.
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
  - Consider purchasing masks for family members to help protect against germs.

## PANDEMIC FLU RESOURCES

[monroecounty.gov](http://monroecounty.gov)  
Monroe County Web site

The following links are also available on the county Web site:

[pandemicflu.gov](http://pandemicflu.gov)  
Official U.S. government Web site

[nyhealth.gov](http://nyhealth.gov)  
New York State Department of Health

[cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)  
U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

# PANDEMIC FLU

## WHAT MONROE COUNTY RESIDENTS NEED TO KNOW TO BE PREPARED

There is no pandemic flu in the world today but there have been three pandemics in the last 90 years. Flu experts worldwide agree another deadly pandemic is a real possibility. Bird flu is the most likely candidate. Experts fear this virus could change and set off the next human pandemic.



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[monroecounty.gov](http://monroecounty.gov)



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