



camh

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

Are you ready?

When influenza spreads worldwide



What is influenza?

Influenza, or flu, is a sickness caused by germs called viruses. When you have the flu, you will cough, have a fever and have body aches. This is known as a regular or seasonal flu.

What is a pandemic?

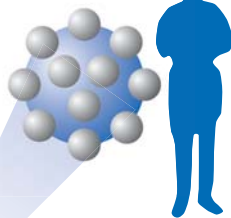
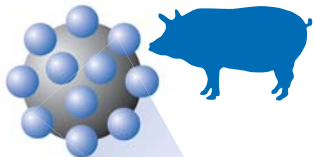
A pandemic is any disease that spreads quickly through many countries.

What is a pandemic influenza?

A pandemic influenza is a new flu that spreads quickly through many countries. People's bodies are not ready for it, so it can infect a very large number of people.

One flu virus spreads very quickly only among animals (example: swine flu virus).

One flu virus spreads only among people.



When the two viruses come together, they make a new virus which can spread quickly among many people.

How does a flu pandemic start?

The regular flu changes all the time

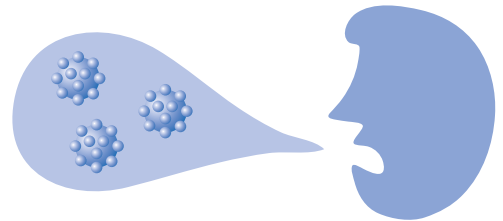
Flu viruses change all the time. The changes are usually very small. When the flu changes a bit, flu shots are changed a little bit too. That way, if you get a flu shot from a doctor or nurse, your body gets help to fight the flu.

A new flu shows up

Sometimes, a new flu shows up that no one is ready for. The old flu shots are not right for it. Our bodies do not know how to fight it.

Where did the new flu come from?

The new flu virus is made when a quick-spreading animal flu and a people's flu come together. The new flu can spread very quickly from person to person.



How does the new flu spread?

The new flu spreads the same way as a regular flu does—from person to person, or from a person to an object and then back to a person.

Person to person (direct contact)

If someone who is sick sneezes or coughs, very small drops fly into the air; other people can catch the virus if they breathe in the small drops or if the droplets reach their eyes or nose. People can also get the virus by touching their own mouth, eyes or nose after shaking hands, hugging or kissing a sick person.

