

How Does Seasonal Flu Differ From Pandemic Flu (H1N1)?

Seasonal Flu	<i>Pandemic Flu (H1N1)</i>
Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns; occurs annually, usually in winter, in temperate climates	<i>Occurs rarely (three times in 20th century - last in 1968)</i>
Usually some immunity built up from previous exposure	<i>No previous exposure; little or no pre-existing immunity</i>
Healthy adults usually not at risk for serious complications; the very young, the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions at increased risk for serious complications	<i>Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications</i>
Health systems can usually meet public and patient needs	<i>Health systems may be overwhelmed</i>
Vaccine developed based on known flu strains and available for annual flu season	<i>Vaccine probably would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic</i>
Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available	<i>Effective antivirals may be in limited supply</i>
Average U.S. deaths approximately 36,000/yr	<i>Number of deaths could be quite high (e.g., U.S. 1918 death toll approximately 675,000)</i>
Symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain. Deaths often caused by complications, such as pneumonia.	<i>Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent</i>
Generally causes modest impact on society (e.g., some school closing, encouragement of people who are sick to stay home)	<i>May cause major impact on society (e.g. widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellation of large public gatherings)</i>
Manageable impact on domestic and world economy	<i>Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy</i>

For additional information on seasonal flu visit: <http://www.hhs.gov/flu>