



What are the differences between seasonal, avian and pandemic flu?

SEASONAL FLU

- Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns; occurring annually, usually in the winter
- People may have some immunity built up from previous exposures
- Adults that are healthy are not usually at risk for serious complications; the very young, the elderly and those with certain health conditions are at an increased risk for complications
- Health systems can usually meet public and patient needs
- A vaccine is developed based on known flu virus strains and is available annually
- Antivirals are usually available
- Approximately 36,000 people in the US die each year from the seasonal flu
- Symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose and muscle pain; death is often caused by complications, such as pneumonia
- Seasonal flu generally causes modest impact on society (staying home from work)
- Domestic and world economy experience a manageable impact

AVIAN (BIRD) FLU

- Birds throughout Asia and parts of eastern Europe are currently affected, some humans have contracted the disease from direct contact with sick birds
- There is little immunity in the human population
- People that are healthy are not at risk unless they come into direct contact with an infected bird; it's saliva, feces or urine; contaminated services; or by eating inadequately cooked poultry
- Health systems will be available to serve patient needs
- A vaccine currently does not exist
- Antivirals can be used to lessen the possibility of complications
- High percentages of people who contract the Avian Flu are likely to die from respiratory complications
- Symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat and muscles, shortness of breath, eye infections and diarrhea; often these worsen into pneumonia and/or respiratory complications
- Social impact on countries where humans have contracted it are major (Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam)
- The poultry industry in Asia has experienced economic impact and if infected birds are found elsewhere similar results are likely

PANDEMIC FLU

- Pandemic Flu occurs rarely (three times in the 20th Century – last in 1968)
- Humans have no previous exposure and little or no pre-existing immunity
- People that are healthy may be at increased risk for serious complications
- Health systems likely will be overwhelmed
- A vaccine probably will not be available in the early stages of a pandemic
- Antivirals may be in limited supply
- Death rates could be quite high (worse case scenario: 1918 US death toll was 500,000)
- Symptoms may be more severe than seasonal flu and complications more frequent
- Society may experience a major impact (widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellations of large public gatherings)
- Domestic and world economy may be severely impacted

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