



IT'S FLU SEASON!

Is it Seasonal Flu or Pandemic Flu?

Recently, you have likely heard lots of talk about coronavirus (COVID-19) and concerns raised by public health officials about this strain of the virus. So, why is this different? Why the concern?

To really understand what we are talking about, let's start with a few definitions gathered from merriam-webster.com.

An outbreak is "a sudden rise in the incidence of a disease" and typically is confined to a localized area or a specific group of people. An "outbreak" can become an epidemic if the spread becomes more severe, infecting more people over a wider area.

An epidemic is an outbreak of contagious disease that has become more severe and less localized. It is "an outbreak of disease that spreads quickly and affects many individuals at the same time."

A pandemic is a widespread epidemic, an "outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population."

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19 (source [CDC.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)).

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic.

Let's highlight some of the changes between the season flu and pandemic flu.

Seasonal Flu

Has a predictable pattern; usually winter
Some immunity built up from exposures
Healthy adults usually not at risk for complications
Health systems can cope and meet the needs of the public
Vaccine available for annual flu season
Adequate supply of antivirals
Average deaths in U.S. 36,000
Modest impact on society, economy

Pandemic Flu

Occurs rarely
Little or no immunity due to no previous exposure
Healthy persons may be at increased risk for complications
Health systems will be overwhelmed
Vaccine not available initially
Antivirals limited, if effective
Number would be high, in 1918 – 675,000
Major impact on society, economy, life

Nurse Brenda will be continuing to monitor the latest information on the virus. For reliable information on the coronavirus visit www.nih.gov or www.cdc.gov. If you should need any further information, please contact Nurse Brenda.

Next week we will highlight preparation, protection, & prevention techniques.