

Pandemics in the United States

During the 20th century, the new *influenza A* viruses caused three pandemics, all of which spread around the world within one year of being detected:

- ⌘ **1918-1919**, “Spanish Flu,” designated as *influenza A* (H1N1), caused the highest number of known influenza deaths. More than 500,000 people died in the United States, and up to 50 million people may have died worldwide. Many people died within the first few days after infection, and others died of complications later. Nearly half of those who died were young, healthy adults. Influenza A (H1N1) viruses still circulate today after being introduced again into the human population in the 1970s.
- ⌘ **1957-1958**, “Asian Flu,” *influenza A* (H2N2), caused about 70,000 deaths in the United States. First identified in China in late February 1957, Asian Flu spread to the United States by June 1957.
- ⌘ **1968-1969**, “Hong Kong Flu,” *influenza A* (H3N2), caused about 34,000 deaths in the United States. This virus was first detected in Hong Kong in early 1968 and spread to the United States later that year. *Influenza A* (H3N2) viruses still circulate today.
- ⌘ **Currently, there is NO Pandemic Influenza outbreak.**
- ⌘ **In Louisiana, there are no cases of Avian or bird flu.**

Types of Flu

Seasonal Influenza (or common flu) is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity, and a vaccine is available.

Avian Influenza (or bird flu) is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds. The H5N1 is deadly to domestic fowl and

can be transmitted from birds to humans. There is no human immunity and **no vaccine** is available.



Pandemic Influenza is virulent (extremely infectious) human flu that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

FACTS ABOUT INFLUENZA

- ⌘ Symptoms start one to four days, with an average of two days, after the virus enters the body.
- ⌘ Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms, but they can still spread the virus.
- ⌘ Studies show that adults can spread virus from one day before developing symptoms to up to seven days after getting sick.
- ⌘ Young children can spread the virus for longer than seven days. In general, however, more virus is spread earlier in the illness than later.
- ⌘ Generally, people start feeling better after the body's temperature returns to normal, in about three days, and are ready to return to their normal activities in about a week. It is common for tiredness and a cough to linger on for several more weeks.



OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

Main: 225.763.3535 ▪ Fax: 225.763.5727



Stay Informed! Be Prepared!

Start Here: www.dhh.louisiana.gov