What is the Pandemic Flu?
Historically, pandemic flu has occurred every 11 to 44 years and it’s been 37 years since the last outbreak. The three in the past century include the Spanish (1918), Asian (1957) and Hong Kong (1968). The truth is we have no idea when a pandemic may occur.

Pandemic Flu is infection of many people with an influenza virus on an inter-continental basis. Infection may result in serious illness. Because there is little natural immunity in humans, the disease can spread easily from person to person. Currently, there is no pandemic flu (also known as influenza), however experts, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and Health Canada agree we are overdue for the next Influenza Pandemic.

How is Pandemic Flu Different from Seasonal Flu?
Pandemic flu occurs every few decades, can occur at any time of the year, and because it is a new virus, most people will have little or no immunity to infection. Vaccines will not be available in advance. The seasonal flu occurs every year, usually in winter months, and annual vaccines and antiviral drugs are readily available.

How is Pandemic Influenza related to Avian (Bird) Flu?
Avian influenza is a type of viral infection that occurs naturally among wild birds and is spread through secretions and droppings.

The H5N1 virus is a particular strain of avian influenza which is deadly to most domestic fowl and can be transmitted from birds to humans. There is a chance that the virus can mutate or change, allowing a new virus to form. This virus might spread easily from person to person, resulting in a pandemic influenza, to which humans have little or no immunity.

What is York University Doing about Pandemic Influenza?
The University has taken a proactive approach to emergency management by establishing a dedicated Office of Emergency Preparedness to provide planning for all types of emergencies (human caused and natural), including pandemic influenza. The Office of Emergency Preparedness and Department of Occupational Health & Safety are formally meeting with other Universities and District School Boards to share information and strategies. A Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee is developing a series of plans and procedures that address university operations, postponement of classes, residence requirements for quarantined individuals, as well as the establishment of communications channels to provide updates and guidance to faculty, students and staff, should a pandemic occur. The Departments of Occupational Health & Safety, and the Centre for Student Community & Leadership Development will provide appropriate health education and promotion to faculty, students and staff, including infection control, and universal precautions. Information related to pandemic influenza is available on the Web at www.yorku.ca/epp/influenza.html.
**What Should I be Doing Everyday?**

Contribute to building a strong, healthy immune system by following these daily guidelines.

**Eat Healthy**
Enjoy a variety of foods from all food groups each day. Choose lower fat foods more often. Drink plenty of water throughout the day.

**Get Active**
Add physical activity into your daily routine by taking the stairs or walking across campus. Choosing activities you like to do is the best way to make physical activity a regular part of your life.

**Wash Your Hands**
Proper hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of illness. Wash your hands before eating, after using the washroom, and after coughing or sneezing. Use warm, soapy water and lather for 15 to 20 seconds.

Remember, hand sanitizers may be used when access to warm water and soap are not readily available.

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**What if I Get the Flu?**

*Should a pandemic influenza outbreak occur,* the best way to reduce impacts on the community and our medical resources is to slow down the spread of infection by reducing transmission. This can be accomplished by staying home if you are feeling unwell, and getting plenty of rest.

If you believe yourself to be infected, visit a physician or consult a health care provider, limit contact with others as much as possible to minimize spreading the virus.

In the event of an influenza outbreak, please refer to the Web sites below for updated information.

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For more information:

[www.yorku.ca/epp/influenza.html](http://www.yorku.ca/epp/influenza.html)

Toronto Public Health website to get the complete Toronto Public Health Pandemic Influenza plan

[http://www.toronto.ca/health/pandemicflu](http://www.toronto.ca/health/pandemicflu)