

## What is the difference between yearly influenza outbreaks and a pandemic?

<i>Question</i>	<i>Yearly Outbreaks</i>	<i>Pandemic</i>
<b><i>When does flu happen?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Typically occurs in the Fall and Winter every year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can occur at any time of the year</li> <li>• Has occurred 3 times in the 20<sup>th</sup> century</li> </ul>
<b><i>How many people are affected?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% of the population may be affected during a typical flu season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pandemic may strike 25 – 35% of the population</li> </ul>
<b><i>How are the illnesses different?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most people, if they are generally healthy, typically experience a 7 day illness that resolves itself without complications</li> <li>▪ Vulnerable groups like the elderly and the chronically ill are at higher risk for complications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pandemic influenza viruses tend to cause high rates of serious illness and higher rates of death</li> <li>▪ Because there has been no prior exposure to the virus everyone is at risk of becoming infected</li> </ul>
<b><i>Is there a shot I can get?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flu vaccines need to “match” the circulating flu virus in order to be effective in reducing risk for the disease</li> <li>• Most of the time, the “match” is successful because the make up the vaccine can be predicted from the previous circulating influenza virus</li> <li>• Vaccine is typically available in October for a regular flu season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because flu vaccines are made specifically from the virus causing illness, it may be several months before a vaccine for a pandemic virus is ready</li> <li>• This year’s vaccine will be ineffective against a pandemic virus</li> </ul>
<b><i>Can I get the shot for free?</i></b>	<p>In New Brunswick the following groups are eligible for vaccine each year at no charge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Babies 6 – 23 months</li> <li>▪ Seniors <math>\geq</math> 65 years</li> <li>▪ Residents of nursing homes</li> <li>▪ Those with chronic diseases that put them at risk for developing serious complications due to influenza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the event of a shortage of vaccine there may be a need to vaccinate certain groups first like health care and essential service workers. This ensures that those services will continue without the threat of staff illness interrupting them</li> <li>▪ As more vaccine becomes available more people will be eligible to receive it</li> </ul>
<b><i>Are there drugs that will treat influenza?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are special drugs that can lessen the length and severity of the disease and have been found to prevent the disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These drugs are expected to be in short supply. The best use of a limited supply will depend on who is affected by the pandemic virus</li> <li>• Priority groups like hospitalized patients, ill health care workers, ill essential care workers have been identified to receive these medications</li> </ul>