

NON-PHARMACEUTICAL INTERVENTIONS

Non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) refer to measures that individuals and communities can take to reduce the person-to-person transmission of influenza. Some of these measures involve “social distancing,” which means keeping people physically separated from each other so that there is less opportunity for the influenza virus to be transmitted from one person to another. Other measures have more to do with maintaining good personal hygiene and are not unique to pandemic influenza. While some measures require substantial advance planning and would only be implemented during a moderate or severe pandemic, others can be implemented through ongoing health promotion efforts and have broad public health benefits.

To promote the following *community-level* NPIs, national and local officials must first analyze their advantages and disadvantages, including their likely health, economic, and social impact and acceptability. Using this information, officials must then develop policies and plans for how these measures would be implemented. These community-level NPIs include the following:

- Canceling public gatherings such as religious services, festivals, and sporting events
- Discouraging people from visiting crowded places such as markets
- Closing schools and non-essential businesses temporarily
- Introducing the voluntary quarantine of those who are exposed to patients with influenza

To promote the following *household-level* NPIs, countries can provide training to community health workers and communication to the public on the following:

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water or apply a germ-killing handrub after:
 - contact with an influenza patient or with objects near or used by a patient;
 - using the bathroom
 - handling garbage or animal waste
 - coughing or sneezing
- Maintain good respiratory etiquette by covering coughs and sneezes: sneeze into upper arm or tissue instead of hand and dispose of tissue properly
- Keep your distance – at least 2 meters – away from other people during an outbreak.
 - Avoid crowds (for example, only send one designated person to the market)
 - Limit travel and avoid crowded public transportation, if possible
 - Work from home, if possible
- Isolate patients infected with influenza from other family and community members. Care for the patient in the home, with only one family member providing care, if possible.