



Introduction

What is a pandemic?

An influenza pandemic happens when a new virus subtype emerges that has not previously circulated in humans. Similar to an epidemic, a pandemic is a disease outbreak where several people become severely ill with the same virus at the same time. However, unlike an epidemic, a pandemic spreads throughout the world and results in an extremely high illness rate unless prevention strategies are rapidly implemented.

Why does the university need to prepare?

Communities need to prepare for a pandemic because it has the potential to spread very quickly. An outbreak could significantly interrupt normal university functions for a period of two to four weeks or up to several months, and it may require closure of on-campus housing and university operations. The university community is taking aggressive steps now to prepare for the potential of such a pandemic in the best interest of minimizing the risk of exposure among students, faculty, and staff.

What You Can Do to Prepare

Make your emergency plan *now*

Your ability to stay healthy and to respond effectively will depend in part on your advance planning. If a pandemic occurs, the university may have to evacuate for some period of time. To make sure you are ready to respond, think through your personal emergency plan and address the following considerations:

If you live on or near campus and have to travel some distance to your permanent residence, what are your primary travel plans? Do you have a contingency plan?

- If you must travel by air or rail, do you have your travel agency or reservation information handy? Have you familiarized yourself with evacuation plans by university departments, including pickup sites for shuttles to public transportation stations? Check prepared.american.edu for the most current information.
- If you plan to drive, do you have at least one alternate route?
- If you will be picked up, do you have contact information ready?
- If you cannot get home, is there a friend or family member nearby who would let you stay during a campus closure (for what could be an extended stay)?
- If you live in a university residence hall, ask your RD what the procedure for evacuation might be and visit american.edu/ocl/housing for the most current information. If you live in off-campus housing, check with your manager or landlord for what the evacuation procedure might be.

If you commute and an evacuation is ordered, do you have at least one alternative commuter route between campus and your home?

Familiarize yourself with local resources for traffic updates and road conditions, including wtopnews.com.

What should you do if your on-campus classes are interrupted, but your academic activities continue remotely through email or other communications? Prepare to have the following at home:

- books and transportable (nonhazardous, nonsecure) research materials
- laptop and portable technology devices and Internet access
- class syllabi and faculty and other student contact information
- individual course plans in the event of a campus evacuation
- e-mail access and online learning options

For more information, visit prepared.american.edu.

What should you know in case you require health care when the Student Health Center is closed?

- You have access to a telephone help line staffed by health care professionals. If you are a student health insurance subscriber, call Managed Care at 866-751-2723. If you are not on the student insurance plan, call FONEMED at 866-900-7162; tell the nurse you are an AU student. The Student Health Center Web site has additional helpful information on how to access after-hours health care: american.edu/ocl/healthcenter.
- Know how to communicate with your family physician.
- Contact information for local hospitals is on the university's emergency site: prepared.american.edu.
- You will need your health insurance information in the event you are hospitalized.

Other Important Considerations

Will the university be able to reach you after you have evacuated?

The university may need to rely on phone and internet communications to be in touch with you during a pandemic. Please make sure your contact information is up to date (both email and phone) in the Campus Connect system. Check the information by going to prepared.american.edu, and click on the Campus Connect link. Resident students should ensure that hall desk staff have their current cell phone numbers.

Have you enrolled in the Tuition Refund Insurance Plan?

- You may find information about the plan on the Student Health Center Web site: american.edu/ocl/healthcenter/Tuition-Refund-Plan.cfm. The plan minimizes financial loss if you must withdraw from the university for health reasons before the end of the semester.
- You must be enrolled *before* the first day of classes.

Do you have a personal emergency kit?

- Contact information: Have phone and e-mail contact information for family and friends, as well as a *previously identified* third-party contact, in the event that you cannot reach a family member directly.
- Medications: Fill prescriptions and have over-the-counter items in supply. Ask your health care provider about potential side effects or withdrawal symptoms you might experience if you are without your medications for a few days. Ask if there are ways to alleviate these effects or symptoms.

- Health and hygiene items: Have a supply of tissues, toilet paper, antibacterial (waterless) gel, soap, disinfecting cleaning solution, trash bags, and other necessary personal items.
- Food and water: Preparation experts recommend at least a two-week supply of nonperishable items to minimize trips to the store.

If you work on campus, have you arranged for direct deposit?

In the event of a campus closure, any earnings you are scheduled to receive will only be issued electronically. Checks cannot be issued until the university reopens.

- If you do not have a bank checking account, create one.
- To arrange for direct deposit of your paycheck to your bank account, go to the AU portal my.american.edu or contact the payroll office at 202-885-3520.

What is the best general source of information on pandemic conditions?

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention cdc.gov.

Stay tuned . . .

Watch for information updates on e-mail and on the university's emergency preparedness Web site: prepared.american.edu. The information we share and the preparations we *all* make will help us respond more effectively to something we hope will never happen..