

Please note: All throughout an outbreak, we will have updates and instructions in our bulletin. You should also visit the diocese's website for more information.

(D) Recovery

It will take a while for things to get back to normal. We will make changes slowly and with the advice of public health officials.

H1N1 Flu Tips

The H1N1 Flu virus appears to be spread from one person to another just like the seasonal flu. This virus is spread by germs from coughing and sneezing or germs on your hands. As with seasonal flu, individuals and families can do several simple things to prevent infection and stop the spread of disease:



Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. If you have no tissue handy, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.



Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick (for example avoid church, malls, restaurants)



The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a seasonal flu shot. Seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against H1N1 Flu. The H1N1 Flu vaccine will be given as a separate shot when it becomes available.

PREPARING FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA AND OTHER INFLUENZA OUTBREAKS



The Flu, Your Parish, and You...

This year, we are faced with a special challenge. As flu season approaches, not only do we have to be concerned about the regular (or “seasonal”) flu, but we also need to be concerned about H1N1, a new form of the flu. Because this is a new flu virus, almost all of us will be able to catch it. Therefore, it is important that we prepare for this year’s flu season carefully—not only as individuals and families, but as parishes as well.

The Diocese of Davenport has put together a policy to help parishes prepare for this kind of emergency. The policy calls on parishes and schools to make certain changes in the way they do things, depending on how the flu is spreading and on how severe the flu is in people. We talk about Remote Preparation, Immediate Preparation, Response (in four Steps), and Recovery. The full policy can be found on our website: www.davenportdiocese.org.

Here are some important points for you to know for each part of our policy:

(A) Remote Preparation

During this time, parishes need to be encouraging good hygiene (including washing of hands by communion ministers before and after distributing communion) and remind everyone to stay home if they get sick. Please remember: if you are sick, you don’t have the obligation to go to Mass.

(B) Immediate Preparation

When it looks as if an outbreak is going to happen, parishes need to make sure that they have made all their plans for a flu outbreak. They also need to make sure that they have the supplies that they need on hand.

(C) Response to Threat

Our response to an outbreak includes four Steps:

Step 1

Once an outbreak begins, parishes need to keep reminding people about cough and sneeze etiquette, good hand washing, and to stay home if sick (see the section “H1N1 Flu Tips” below). You may also notice bulletin inserts describing what is going on and what might happen in the outbreak becomes more serious. You should be ready for the chance that schools might close or programs be cancelled.

Step 2

If things get worse, we would reinforce that all sick individuals (including clergy, staff and volunteers) need to stay home. Your parish, if it has not already done so, should set up hand washing stations. The biggest changes will come at Mass:

- If you are sick, please stay home (notify us, and we will bring Communion to you, if possible)
- Communion will not be distributed under the form of wine
- Communion will not be distributed on the tongue
- The Sign of Peace will not be shared with a handshake (rather, a bow will be used)
- We will not hold hands during the Lord’s Prayer
- The Priest(s), and the other ministers, will not be shaking hands in greeting
- Hand washing stations have been set up for your use
- We will be changing the holy water in the fonts at least daily (and after each liturgy)

Step 3

If things become more severe, we will also make the following changes:

- Collection baskets will not be passed
- Hymnals and misallettes will not be used
- Seating will be in alternate rows (as much as possible)
- The “box” confessionals will no longer be used
- Holy Water fonts will be emptied; bottles of holy water will be available
- There will be no large group baptisms, weddings, or funerals
- Children’s Liturgy of the Word and after-Mass refreshments are discontinued

Step 4

Finally, it may become necessary to cancel Mass altogether. A booklet will be available for prayer at home.