

# Fact Sheet **Pandemic Influenza Antiviral Medication**

## General Public

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### **What does influenza antiviral medication do?**

Antiviral medication stops a disease caused by a virus from spreading inside a person's body. If a person is sick with influenza and uses influenza antiviral medication correctly, it may shorten the time a person is sick and may stop a person from getting sicker from influenza. If taken quickly enough after exposure, antiviral medication may keep a person from getting sick after being near someone with influenza.

### **Why is the state purchasing and storing influenza antiviral medication?**

The state bought and will store a limited number of influenza antiviral medications to prepare for pandemic influenza. Storing the influenza antiviral medication now may prevent or reduce the possibility of shortages of the medications during an actual pandemic influenza.

### **What is included in the state's supply of influenza antiviral medication?**

The antiviral medications included in the state's antiviral medication supply are Tamiflu® and Relenza®.

### **If pandemic influenza happens, is there enough antiviral medication for everyone?**

The state will have medication to cover about 25 percent of the population.

### **How might antiviral medications be used during pandemic influenza?**

According to federal guidelines, the antiviral medications purchased by the state will be mainly used for treatment during pandemic influenza.

### **What happens if there is a shortage of antiviral medications during a pandemic?**

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) will determine who will receive the medication.

### **How will IDPH hand out antiviral medication during a pandemic?**

IDPH has plans to decide the best way to hand out antiviral medications but many of those decisions can't be made until a pandemic happens.

### **Can antivirals cure influenza?**

No, but when used correctly, antiviral medication may shorten the time sick by one or two days and may reduce the spread of influenza to others. Antiviral medication may also reduce getting serious influenza complications.

### **What side effects are associated with influenza antiviral medications?**

There are different side effects for each of the antiviral medications. Ask a health care provider how to take antiviral medication and about any possible side effects.

### **Who will be helped most from antiviral medication?**

It is not known who will be at the highest risk of illness from pandemic influenza until a pandemic occurs. However, people at high risk of becoming sick or dying from seasonal influenza may be helped most from antiviral medication. For seasonal influenza this includes people 65 years of age and older, children 6 months to 5 years old and people with chronic medical conditions (heart or lung disease, diabetes and asthma).