

## The World Health Organisation global influenza preparedness plan

Inter-pandemic phase	Low risk of human cases	1
New virus in animals, no human cases	Higher risk of human cases	2
Pandemic alert	No or very limited human-to-human transmission	3
New virus causes human cases	Evidence of increased human-to-human transmission	4
	Evidence of significant human-to-human transmission	5
Pandemic	Efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission	6

Experts at WHO and elsewhere believe that the world is now closer to another influenza pandemic than at any time since 1968, when the last of the previous century's three pandemics occurred. WHO uses a series of six phases of pandemic alert as a system for informing the world of the seriousness of the threat and of the need to launch progressively more intense preparedness activities.

The designation of phases, including decisions on when to move from one phase to another, is made by the Director-General of WHO.

Each phase of alert coincides with a series of recommended activities to be undertaken by WHO, the international community, governments, and industry. Changes from one phase to another are triggered by several factors, which include the epidemiological behaviour of the disease and the characteristics of circulating viruses.

The world is presently in phase 3: a new influenza virus subtype is causing disease in humans, but is not yet spreading efficiently and sustainably among humans.