



PANDEMIC INFLUENZA INFORMATION

Pandemic Influenza

- Pandemic influenza is a global outbreak caused by a new strain of flu virus.
- Experts predict a flu pandemic will occur, but it is difficult to forecast when it will occur.
- A pandemic may affect daily life for a period of time and could include school and business closings, as well as disruptions in the economy and everyday functions.



Avian Flu

- Avian flu is a disease caused by bird flu viruses that primarily infect birds but may also infect other animals, including humans.
- Flu viruses mutate frequently and can infect other animals and humans.
- **Currently, H5N1, a specific type of avian flu virus, has not mutated to permit easy human-to-human transmission** despite the fact that more than 200 humans have been infected and more than 100 have died.

Transmission (Spread of Disease) and Symptoms

	Seasonal Flu	Avian Flu
Transmission	Spread through droplets expelled during coughing and sneezing.	Spread through contact with infected birds, their droppings or blood or surfaces exposed to them. However, due to the changing nature of flu viruses, it is possible that avian flu may mutate to spread from person to person.
Symptoms	High fever, headache, fatigue, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle aches, nausea (which may lead to vomiting and diarrhea)	Similar to those of seasonal flu but may include abdominal pain, chest pain, eye infections and severe respiratory diseases.
Who Is at Risk	Those 65 years or older, those who live in long-term care facilities or need regular medical attention, those prone to asthma or other respiratory conditions and young children (6–23 months)	People of all ages are at risk. Past pandemic influenza outbreaks suggest that healthy young adults, including pregnant women, may be most at risk of exposure.



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Prevention

Flu viruses can be prevented by vaccines, antiviral medicines and good hygiene.

- Update flu shots and other vaccinations to boost immunity.
- Get vaccinated every year because the vaccine is changed along with the mutating flu virus to help fight the most threatening strain.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid contact with people who are ill.
- Teach your children flu prevention hygiene.
- Properly cook poultry to destroy all germs, including the avian flu virus.

Vaccine and Treatment

- **Currently, there is no vaccine commercially available for the H5N1 avian flu virus;** however, several are in various phases of testing.
- Vaccines can be produced only after the pandemic strain appears.
- Antiviral medicines can treat some cases of avian flu.

Preparation

- Contact local officials and check health and government Web sites to stay informed and plan as you would for any emergency.
- Get an emergency supply kit. Stock water, food and medical needs for at least two weeks.
- Make a family emergency plan, including care for extended family members.
- Plan alternative transportation routes to school and work, and make a communication plan.
- Be aware of emergency, containment or evacuation plans and distribution sites.
- Consider helping members of your community who might need assistance during an outbreak.

Emergency Response

- Be calm—stay informed and follow emergency plans.
- Practice infection control:
 - Good hygiene (especially washing hands)
 - Social distancing:
 - Limit direct contact by not shaking hands.
 - Telecommute or hold telephone or video conferences.
 - Maintain personal space of three feet or more.
- Limit exposure with sick people, and stay home if you are sick.
- Quarantine and isolation measures may be used to limit movement of people who may have been exposed to the disease and separate those infected with the disease.
- Report to your command if you are military or civilian personnel or a member of the selective reserves.

Where to Find Additional Information

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—www.pandemicflu.gov
- World Health Organization (WHO)—www.who.int/topics/avian_influenza/en/

It's up to you. Prepare strong. Get an emergency supply kit with enough supplies for at least three days, make an emergency plan with your family and be informed about what might happen.

