



PANDEMIC INFLUENZA INFORMATION



- 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.
- 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 Influenza A (H7N9) Virus

- Avian flu is a disease caused by bird flu viruses that primarily infect birds, but may also infect other animals, including humans. Human infections with the H7N9 virus were first reported in China in March 2013. Most of the infections are believed to result from exposure to infected poultry or contaminated environments.
- While some mild illnesses in human H7N9 cases have been seen, most patients have had severe respiratory illness, with about one-third resulting in death.
- Most of the reported cases of human infection with this virus have had very serious illness. There also are reports of some milder illness and one possible report of a person who tested positive for the virus who did not have any symptoms.
- Rare, limited person-to-person spread of this virus has been identified in China, but there is no evidence of sustained person-to-person spread of H7N9.
- The new H7N9 virus has not been detected in people or birds in the United States.

Transmission (Spread of Disease)

- The available epidemiological and virological information strongly indicates that most known human H7N9 infections result from direct contact with infected poultry, or indirect contact with infected poultry (for example, by visiting wet markets and having contact with environments where infected poultry have been kept or slaughtered).
- A minority of cases appear to have resulted from limited person to person transmission. Because H7N9 infections do not cause severe disease in poultry, this infection can spread “silently” among poultry. Under such circumstances, the exact exposure for individual cases of human infection may be difficult to establish.

Symptoms

- Thus far, most patients with this infection have had severe pneumonia. Common symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Only a small number of people who presented with influenza-like symptoms and then recovered without medical attention.

Prevention

- Hand hygiene
 - Wash your hands before, during, and after you prepare food; before you eat; after you use the toilet; after handling animals or animal waste; when your hands are dirty; and before and after providing care to anyone in your home who is sick.
 - Wash your hands with soap and running water when hands are visibly dirty; if hands are not visibly dirty, wash them with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.



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Prevention (Continued)

- Respiratory hygiene
 - When coughing or sneezing, the person should cover her/his mouth and nose with a medical mask, tissue, or a sleeve or flexed elbow; throw the used tissue into a closed bin immediately after use; perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions.
- Food safety
 - Because influenza viruses are inactivated by normal temperatures used for cooking, meat products and eggs can be safely consumed provided they are properly handled during food preparation and thoroughly cooked (so that food reaches 70°C in all parts, e.g. poultry meat is not pink). In areas experiencing outbreaks, the consumption of raw or incompletely cooked meat products and eggs is a high-risk practice and should be discouraged.
 - Do not eat animals that are clearly sick or that have died of diseases or unexpectedly.

Vaccine and Treatment

- There is no vaccine to protect against this virus. CDC and others are working to develop a vaccine candidate virus that could be used to make a vaccine if it is needed.
- CDC recommends oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®) for treatment of H7N9. Most of the H7N9 viruses that have been studied are likely susceptible (sensitive) to the two influenza antiviral drugs that are used to treat seasonal flu. Like seasonal influenza viruses, avian A (H7N9) viruses are resistant to the influenza antiviral drugs known as the adamantanes.

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.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-faq.htm>
- World Health Organization (WHO)—http://www.who.int/influenza/human_animal_interface/faq_H7N9/en/
- Ready Army—www.ready.army.mil

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.

