

- Reliable, accurate and timely information is available at www.pandemicflu.gov.
- Another source for information on pandemic influenza is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline at: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636). This line is available in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY: 1-888-232-6348. Questions can be e-mailed to cdcinfo@cdc.gov; visit the web site at www.cdc.gov/flu/avian.
- Look for information on your local www.ochealthinfo.com and state government www.cdca.ca.gov/ahfss/ah/AvianInfluenza.htm web sites.
- Listen to local and national radio, watch news reports on television, and read your newspaper and other sources of printed and web-based information.



Pandemic Influenza

... and your role as a County Disaster Service Worker



A guide on the role of county employees
in the event of a pandemic flu.

Pandemic Influenza

Message from the County Health Officer

As most of you are aware, health experts around the globe are concerned about the potential of avian influenza (bird flu) to infect humans and ultimately cause a very serious worldwide pandemic. Though we cannot predict with any certainty that this will occur, it is important that each one of us is prepared to take care of ourselves and our families, and be ready to serve as "disaster service workers" as needed to support our community if and when a pandemic occurs.

This brochure is provided to assist you in several ways.

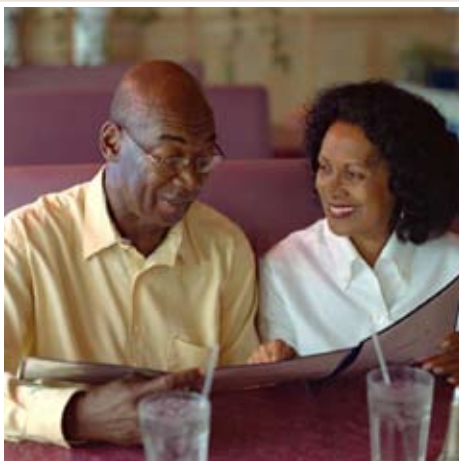
- To provide information about seasonal and pandemic influenza.
- To let you know what steps you can take now to be better prepared for a pandemic or other natural and man-made disasters.
- To understand your role as a disaster service worker in the event of a pandemic.

Preparing for pandemic influenza is not a job just for public health. Individual action and individual responsibility are necessary for the success of any measures. We all can take a few important steps right now to prepare our homes and families for a potential influenza pandemic.



Eric G. Handler, MD, MPH, FAAP
County Health Officer

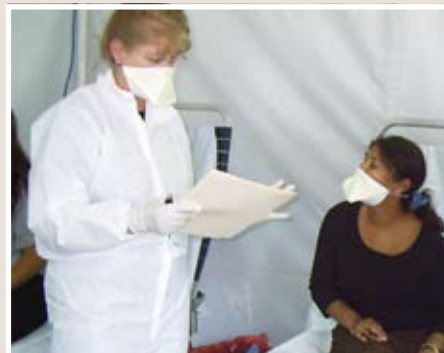
www.ochealthinfo.com



Pandemic Influenza

As a County employee, what are my responsibilities?

Did you know that the government code declares that all County employees are disaster service workers?



The County of Orange is responsible for protecting the health and safety of the public during times of disaster or emergency, and the Orange County Health Care Agency is responsible for assuring appropriate staff is available to respond to the public health needs of our community.

As a County employee, you are a disaster service worker. Your County identification badge is also your disaster service worker identification. In order to

fulfill your responsibilities as a disaster service worker, County employees are expected to work in routine and non-routine circumstances.

In the event of pandemic influenza or another public health emergency, employees may be called upon to perform duties outside of your regular job responsibilities. As an example, employees may be needed to assist in setting up and staffing vaccination clinics. In addition, a number of County agencies other than your own will be involved in responding to pandemic influenza and may have additional staffing needs that you may be asked to assist with. You will be assigned to appropriate duties based on your training and experience. Additional training and support will be provided for any duties that you may be asked to perform that are different than your usual duties. It will be very important for every employee who is able to work to be available to do his or her part. Employees who are unable to work should follow County policy for contacting his or her supervisor.

Pandemic Influenza

What is HCA doing to prepare for a pandemic?

The Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) adopted a pandemic influenza response plan in 2004 and is currently in the process of revising this plan.

OCHCA has engaged community partners and is planning a series of exercises to test and refine the plan and provide training for county disaster service workers.

- expanding capabilities for mass vaccinations
- collaborating with public and private partners to encourage business continuity plans

The plan focuses on:

- early detection and laboratory confirmation of human infections with avian influenza
- educating Health Care Agency staff and the public on topics associated with pandemic influenza
- strategies for limiting the spread of pandemic influenza
- coordinating efforts with hospitals, emergency medical service providers, physicians and other healthcare providers to develop a surge capacity plan for treating large numbers of additional patients



What is ...

... seasonal influenza (also called flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that affect the nose, throat and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness. The best way to prevent this illness is by getting a flu shot each fall.

... pandemic influenza?

When a new influenza virus infects many people around the world, it is called pandemic influenza. As of [publication date], there is no pandemic influenza anywhere in the world.

For more detailed information about pandemic influenza visit the Federal Government's website at www.pandemicflu.gov.

... avian influenza (bird flu)?

Avian influenza is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses. These flu viruses occur naturally among birds and can make domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill them. There are many different avian influenza viruses; the one in the news recently is known as H5N1. As of [publication date] there is no avian influenza H5N1 in the U.S.

For the most current information about avian influenza, see the World Health Organization website at www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en.



Get the facts ...

How do people become infected with avian influenza viruses?

Most cases of avian influenza infection in humans have resulted from direct or close contact with infected poultry (e.g., butchering and defeathering infected chickens, ducks and turkeys) or surfaces contaminated with feces and other bodily fluids from infected birds. The current H5N1 virus would have to undergo significant changes in order to pass easily from birds to humans, and from person to person.

Is there a vaccine or treatment to protect humans from H5N1 virus?

While there currently is no commercially available vaccine to protect humans against the H5N1 virus, efforts to develop a vaccine are taking place and a series of clinical trials are under way. In the event of pandemic influenza, it may take several months for a vaccine to become available. A vaccine for seasonal influenza is available, and it's a good idea to get a flu shot every fall. For more information about the H5N1 vaccine development process, visit the National Institutes of Health website www3.niaid.nih.gov/news.

Studies done in laboratories suggest that some of the prescription medicines called antivirals that are approved for human influenza viruses may also work in treating the avian influenza infection in humans. Two antiviral medications, oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza), might work to treat influenza caused by H5N1 virus.

Is there a risk for becoming infected with avian influenza by eating poultry or eggs?

Fully cooking poultry and eggs kills the virus, as well as bacteria that are often present in poultry—use a thermometer to make sure the correct internal temperature for poultry of 165 F is reached. All parts of poultry should be fully cooked, with no pink parts. Cook eggs so that the yolk and white are not runny. Carefully wash cutting boards, utensils and all surfaces that have come into contact with raw poultry or eggs in hot, soapy water. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling poultry or eggs and dry them with a disposable towel.

For more information about avian influenza and food safety issues, visit the US Food and Drug Administration website www.cfsan.fda.gov.

What should I do to prepare?

Just as public agencies are preparing for a pandemic, individuals must prepare as well. You will be better able to function as a disaster service worker if you are well prepared at home. In the event of a pandemic, schools may be closed; transportation services may be disrupted; and you or your loved ones may become ill. To be prepared for such a significant challenge, it is important for every individual and family to have a workable, realistic, and effective emergency response plan. Some important things to consider are childcare, transportation, access to health care, and a possible extended absence from work.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Guide

for Individuals and Families, available at www.pandemicflu.gov, has recommendations that all employees are strongly encouraged to follow. Basic preparedness tips include:

- Make good hygiene a habit —wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; don't use your hands.
- Keep emergency supplies on hand and stock a supply of food and water. Choose non-perishable foods like canned foods, soup packets and dried foods that are easy to prepare, and require little water.

Reliable, accurate and timely information is available at www.pandemicflu.gov and www.readyoc.org.