



PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

February 2008

LIVERMORE-PLEASANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

www.lpfire.org

Avian (Bird) Flu— Avoid the “Chicken Little” Anxiety Syndrome

If Chicken Little would have known about the bird flu, she would have forgotten about warning everyone that the sky was ‘falling’. Instead she would have taken up the more legitimate task of proclaiming “the bird flu is coming!”

Although there is no need to run around yelling about it, there is definitely a need to be prepared. After all, Avian flu already *has* come to many places in the world. Since December 2003, the bird flu virus has infected and killed hundreds of thousands of birds in places such as Asia, Africa, the Pacific, Europe and the Near East. It has also infected 350 humans who have had close contact with infected birds¹.

Unlike the “sky falling”, bird flu is a

valid cause about which to raise awareness. Concerns about bird flu outbreak among humans have been expressed by nationally recognized scientists, public health officials, and other health professionals.

The Cities of Livermore and Pleasanton are preparing on a community level to be able to respond to a pandemic. However, each individual also must be prepared. That means you! There are simple things that you can do in your home and in the community to help prepare yourself and those you love, to decrease your risk of being affected by Avian flu outbreak.

This newsletter was created especially for the Livermore-Pleasanton community to teach what you can



do to be prepared in case of Avian flu outbreak. Those who are prepared can avoid the “Chicken Little” anxiety syndrome. The flu may be coming, but if it does, you can be prepared. Please take this information and apply it. We invite you to be prepared, and to feel the peace of mind that accompanies that preparation. —LPFD

What is Avian Influenza (Flu)?

Have you ever imagined a bird with a fever and a cough? Probably not. But birds can get the flu just like humans can. Birds have their own strains of flu that can make them sick. Certain strains of the flu have caused more severe sickness in birds than others. One emerging strain of influenza, called H5N1, is of special concern to public health officials. This strain has infected and killed hundreds

of thousands of birds, and has shown that it can jump the species barrier and infect humans as well. As of January 2008, 350 cases of bird flu in humans have been confirmed, resulting in severe sickness and 216 deaths worldwide.² The mortality rate of the H5N1 strain of bird flu in humans is over 50%.
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Questions answered in this newsletter:

- What is Avian flu?
- How can I protect myself and my loved ones from potential Avian flu outbreak and from disease in general?
- How can I plan for a pandemic individually as well as in a family unit or household?



What is Avian Flu? (Continued from pg. 1)

People can get Avian flu from contact with infected birds, their raw products, or bird feces.

Signs and symptoms of an Avian flu infection include severe flu symptoms like fever, cough, muscle aches and sore throat, accompanied by more serious complications such as eye infections or pneumonia, which can be fatal.



Each time a person is infected, the H5N1 virus has a new chance to

mutate into a virus that could become transmissible to others. If person-to-person transfer was to occur, it could lead to a global outbreak, or pandemic.

As of January 2008, no cases of bird flu in birds or humans have been reported in the US. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] has listed pan-

demically Avian flu preparedness as one of its chief concerns.

There is currently no vaccine available for Avian flu. The best method for decreasing risk of infection involves personal preparedness, sanitation, and infection control methods which are discussed in this newsletter. Individuals and communities must be informed and take the necessary precautions to ensure their health and safety.

'Handy' Checklist—How and When to Wash

We have been taught since we were young to wash our hands. Hand washing helps us to stay healthy by avoiding infectious germs. Do you wash your hands often enough, and do you do so in an effective way?

Use our checklist to find out.

According to the CDC, the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to clean our hands.

Make sure you:

- ✓ Wash hands before and after preparing food, after using the bathroom or changing diapers, after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose, after handling money or garbage, and before eating.
- ✓ Use water and soap. Water temperature does not matter, but the time you take does.
- ✓ Lather and wash for 15-20 seconds, making sure to clean both sides of your hands, in between fingers, and under the fingernails.
- ✓ Rinse thoroughly under running water.
- ✓ Dry hands with a clean paper towel, or use a hot-air dryer.
- ✓ If a paper towel is used, use the paper towel to turn off the water, and then dispose of the paper towel.

Parent/Teacher Corner

Children often need reminders of how and when to wash their hands. Help make hand washing fun by thinking of creative ideas of how to make sure that they wash their hands for the necessary 15-20 seconds. Here are some ideas we suggest:

Sing happy birthday twice, try to say the alphabet backwards, or recite a poem.





Planning for a Pandemic



You can take easy steps to protect yourself and those you love

Pandemicflu.gov recommends taking these steps to prepare for a pandemic flu outbreak:

- Store a minimum of a two week supply of water and food. In a pandemic you might not be able to go to the store. These stored supplies will also be useful in the event of other unforeseen emergencies.
- Check prescription medications from time to time to make sure that you have at least two weeks worth of your current prescription available in your home.
- Create a habit of good hygiene practices, including hand washing. (See 'Handy', Checklist, pg. 2)
- Keep a list of emergency contacts, a record of personal and family health information, a first-aid kit, and other health supplies on hand. Remember to include pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes and vitamins in your first aid kit.
- Discuss with family members and other loved ones how they would be cared for if they were to become sick, or what would be needed to care for them in your home.
- Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency response.
- Get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic (please see back page to learn about ways you can help).

Examples of medical, health, and emergency supplies to store for emergency use:

- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment
- Soap and water, or alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash
- Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Thermometer
- Anti-diarrheal medication, vitamins, fluids with electrolytes
- Cleansing agent or soap
- Flashlight, batteries, portable radio, manual can opener
- Garbage bags, tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers

Examples of food and non-perishables to store for emergency use:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, and soups
- Protein or fruit bars, dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter or nuts
- Dried fruit, crackers
- Bottled water, bottled or canned juice
- Baby food formula in cans or jars
- Pet food
- Other non-perishable items

Avian—having to do with birds
Endemic—when a disease is expected to occur in a population (to a certain degree) on a regular basis (e.g. strep throat)
Epidemic—widespread disease, affecting many people at once
Pandemic—when a disease effects the whole country, continent or world. An epidemic over a large area
H5N1— a more severe strain of Avian flu, discussed in this newsletter

How to Protect Yourself Against Flu/Avian Flu

These common-sense steps can help stop the spread of flu germs:

- Wash your hands frequently, using soap and water, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, or cough and sneeze into

your sleeve rather than into your hands. Put used tissues in the trash and then wash your hands.

- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth to prevent germs from getting into your body.
- If you get sick, stay

home and away from others as much as you can.

- Don't send sick children to school.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

From the Alameda County Health Department (www.acphd.org)



Take action to protect yourself from germs

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References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] (June 2007). *Avian Influenza: Current H5N1 Situation*. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>
- World Health Organization (Jan 2008). *Cumulative Number of Confirmed Human Cases of Avian Influenza A/ (H5N1) Reported to WHO*. http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED:

Share this information with those you know

Learn more about pandemic flu by visiting www.pandemicflu.gov

Become an LPFD Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member. For more information call (925) 454-2301.

For more information about Avian flu and pandemic preparedness, please visit our website at www.lpfire.org, call 800-CDC-INFO or visit:



Word Search

V V D A Z I A T H N Q O I K A
 T F R T A B H R G P Y Q J Z Q
 N O I Q V Y B X U Q K W F T D
 P O B M I N R N O U G Y X H Z
 D D A F A G X J C P T T N I N
 S S U F N R W K U N G E O Q J
 F T M P A N D E M I C F K T T
 N O A B M A M M D E I A F R M
 S R U O J T L V A K Y S Q E K
 T A U G S C S T U X V W Z T Z
 S G H A N D W A S H I N G A B
 Y E Z M R P X S J F J A H W J
 K U K S A D Y O Q U I W K D U
 O H U P R E P A R E J R B W H
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