



Appendix I Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan

**""""""The Complete Highland Falls -
""""""Fort Montgomery CSD Plap**

Table of Contents

	<u>PAGE</u>
Statement of Purpose for Amendment to School Safety Plan	2
A. Orange County Contagious Diseases Outbreak Procedure	3
How does Seasonal Flu differ from Pandemic Flu?	4
B. World Health Organization (WHO)/ O-U BOCES Pandemic Alert Phases	
Table 1. World Health Organization Pandemic Response Phases	5
C. BOCES Pandemic Influenza Alert Level Tables (When to Act – Table 2. and Actions to be Taken – Table 3.)	6
Table 2. Pandemic Influenza Alert Level Table	7
Table 3. Pandemic Preparedness Activities	8-9
Supporting Documents	
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Fact Sheet	10-11
Sample Key Messages for School Officials	
Outbreak	12
School Closures	13
Sample Press Releases	
Outbreak occurring and schools remain open	14
Outbreak escalates and schools ordered closed	15
Sample Letters to Parents	
Pandemic Planning Tips for Parents	16
Letter #1 – Prevention Letter	17
Letter #2 – First Bird Case	18
Letter #3 – Initial Outbreak	19
Letter #4 – School Closure	20
Letter #5 – School Re-opens	21
Checklists and Posters	
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist	22-23
American Red Cross Home Care for Pandemic Flu Brochure	24-25
Pandemic Influenza: Characteristics & Challenges	27-39
Various Wall Posters	

March 26, 2007 r.4

District-Wide Safety Plan Amendments Purpose

Orange-Ulster BOCES Risk Management Department working in conjunction with the County of Orange has created this Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan to help the district prepare and respond to a pandemic influenza outbreak. The purpose of the Plan is to describe specific actions to be taken by School personnel in the event of an outbreak. The Plan will be implemented in accordance with the BOCES School Safety Plan and used to advise the administrators about the district response to an influenza pandemic. The Plan encompasses the various aspects of communication and education, preparedness, emergency response, and the recovery activities which will take place in the event of an influenza pandemic.

In the event of an influenza pandemic, the State of New York's Departments of Health will have minimal resources available for onsite local assistance and therefore county authorities and schools and other institutions and agencies will be responsible for county-specific response plans. The federal government has limited resources allocated for State of New York and local plan implementation, and will provide supplementary resources in the event of pandemic influenza, which may include the redirection of personnel and monetary resources from other programs. A viral strain of pandemic influenza will likely emerge outside of the United States. However, pandemic influenza may emerge in New York due to its geographic location, proximity to New York City international airports, tourist populations, and other factors.

BOCES will conduct training, tabletop exercises, drills and other activities with its component districts to better prepare in the upcoming academic year using the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as the system to manage any pandemic influenza or other contagious disease outbreaks.

The Orange County Department of Health has already for a number of years been monitoring hospital admissions, nursing home illnesses and student and school staff absence numbers in a number of districts to determine if there are any contagious disease outbreaks.

The following agencies have provided source materials incorporated into this Plan:

World Health Organization
US Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Orange County New York Department of Health
New York State Department of Health
New York State Education Department
American Red Cross
California Department of Health Services
Contra Costa California Health Services
University of New Hampshire
March 26, 2007 r4

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES OUTBREAK PROCEDURE

A. Administrative Procedure for a Communicable Disease Outbreak

The enclosed checklist was developed to assist School District Superintendents to respond to an official notice of a communicable disease in their school district.



Confirm source of report: County Health Department and/or Physician Office
(845) 291-2332 Orange County Health Department



Health and Safety Team members: School Physician, School Nurse, Building Administrator, Superintendent and his/her designee to determine plan of action, and County Health Department officials who will identify:

- a. Source of Contagion
 - i. Airborne or direct contact spread
 - ii. How contagious is disease? (how easily is it spread)
 - iii. How many people affected at this time?
 - iv. What is incubation period? Will there be more cases expected? How soon?



This will determine if:

- b. Schools remain open during this period of time
- c. School will be closed until contagion is identified or at risk for spreading.
- d. OR, if mass vaccination or testing will be performed on students/faculty/staff.



Designate a contact person in the school district to manage phone calls, press, and to be spokesperson to report your districts management plan and updates.



Write letter to parents/faculty and staff that identifies contagious condition of a student at the school. Indicate direction is taken from the County officials, and give outline as to school district plan. Give telephone numbers for families to call to get more information, and include NYS Communicable Disease form (available on the web) that answers most questions about the disease.



Notify school district employees about the current health situation, and how the district will work with County Officials to prevent the spread of contagion. Identify spokesperson for district.



Give clear concise directions to the custodial staff in the building affected. Take direction from the County regarding disinfection efforts. Should they be normal cleaning routines or enhanced sanitation efforts. Make sure efforts for cleaning is throughout the building and not targeted to one classroom or site. This will prevent the inadvertent identification of the student with the suspected contagious condition.



Schedule community meeting to answer questions and update information as needed.



HOW DOES SEASONAL FLU DIFFER FROM PANDEMIC FLU?

November 1, 2005

SEASONAL FLU

Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns; occurs annually, usually in winter, in temperate climates

Usually some immunity built up from previous exposure

Healthy adults usually not at risk for serious complications (the very young, the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions at increased risk for serious complications)

Health systems can usually meet public and patient needs

Vaccine developed based on known virus strains and available for annual flu season

Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available

Average U.S. deaths approximately 36,000/yr

Symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain. Deaths often caused by complications, such as pneumonia.

Generally causes modest impact on society (e.g., some school closing, encouragement of people who are sick to stay home)

Manageable impact on domestic and world economy

PANDEMIC FLU

Occurs rarely (three times in 20th century - last in 1968)

No previous exposure; little or no pre-existing immunity

Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications

Health systems may be overwhelmed

Vaccine probably would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic

Effective antivirals may be in limited supply

Number of deaths could be quite high (e.g., U.S. 1918 death toll approximately 500,000)

Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent

May cause major impact on society (e.g. widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellation of large public gatherings)

Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy

For additional information visit: www.pandemicflu.gov



Appendix I

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan

**The complete Orange-Ulster BOCES Plan
As Approved on March 26, 2007
Follows**

TABLE 1 – World Health Organization Pandemic Response Phases

PHASES	PUBLIC HEALTH GOALS
Interpandemic phase	
Phase 1. Low Risk of Human Cases No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection or disease is considered to be low.	Strengthen influenza pandemic preparedness at the global, regional, national and local levels.
Phase 2. Higher Risk of Human Cases No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.	Minimize the risk of transmission to humans; detect and report such transmission rapidly if it occurs.
Pandemic alert	
Phase 3. No or very limited human-to-human transmission Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human-to-human spread, or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact.	Ensure rapid characterization of the new virus subtype and early detection, notification and response to additional cases.
Phase 4. Evidence of increased human-to-human transmission Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.	Contain the new virus within limited foci or delay spread to gain time to implement preparedness measures, including vaccine development.
Phase 5. Evidence of significant human-to-human transmission Larger cluster(s) but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk).	Maximize efforts to contain or delay spread, to possibly avert a pandemic, and to gain time to implement pandemic response measures.
Pandemic period	
Phase 6. Efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission Pandemic: increased and sustained transmission in general population.	Minimize the impact of the pandemic.

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

C. TABLE 2 – BOCES Pandemic Influenza Alert Table

In response to the WHO Pandemic Response Alert Phases and in consultation with the County of Orange and New York State Departments of Health, BOCES has established the following alert table of events which trigger additional activities. (In other words, **When do we act?** see [Table 2](#)).

TABLE 2 – BOCES Pandemic Influenza Alert Level Table

What type of transmission is confirmed?	Where are the cases?	Are there cases in New York or Orange County?	BOCES Alert Level
Person-to-person transmission	Anywhere outside North America	No	Planning & Preparation
Person-to-person transmission	Anywhere inside North America (except New York)	No	1
Person-to-person transmission	In New York State	Yes	2
Person-to-person transmission	In Orange County	Yes	3

What actions are to be done are detailed in Table 3–BOCES Pandemic Preparedness Activities.

Table 3 – Orange Ulster BOCES Pandemic Preparedness Activities rev 4

page 1 of 2

Planning & Preparation	Level 1 Anywhere inside North America (Except New York)	Level 2 Anywhere in New York (In addition to Level 1 actions)	Level 3 In Orange County (In addition to Level 2 actions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor national situation through communication with County of Orange and NYS Departments of Health. • Communicate with districts, police, health services, media relations and other departments for planning efforts. • Brief Cabinet on a regular basis and request they identify essential staff that can maintain the School's Facilities and Operations during an emergency. • Meet and coordinate activities with County of Orange DOH Public Health Officials. • Initiate the plan for the School's response to Pandemic Influenza. • Develop a policy for suspension of classes due to a Pandemic Influenza outbreak. • Determine the roles and the responsibilities of faculty and staff to prevent the spread of influenza. • Decide how and when to encourage or require students, faculty & staff to stay home when they are mildly ill. • Ensure that standardized surveillance/disease recognition procedures are in place and implemented. • Educate students, faculty and staff on how and why it is important to improve personal hygiene. Use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of influenza such as covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands and staying home if you're sick. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Health Office staff will receive N-95 respiratory protection training and fit testing. • Provide updates to the Cabinet on a periodic basis and discuss what information is being given to District Wide Health and Safety Committee. • Meet to discuss methods to provide regular updates to staff, students and parents on preparedness and response activities. The team should meet approximately once a month. • District Wide Health and Safety Committee will meet with Coordinator of Health & Safety to be informed of the provisions of New York State Executive Law 2-B and NYS Public Health Laws which authorize officials to order certain actions (i.e. The County Commissioner of Health has the authority to suspend mass gatherings or to order schools to close for a specific period of time). • Begin Heightened Surveillance Reporting. • Send out Parent Letter #3 initial Outbreak, informing parents that schools remain open; include tip sheets and informational resource list. • Work with County of Orange DOH Public Health Officials to issue a press release announcing that schools remain open but parents need to prepare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute N-95 respirators and surgical masks to Health Offices for issuing to district community as specified by the Orange County Commissioner of Health. • Consider possible restrictions to athletic events, vendors, visitors and conferences/group activities. • The Risk Mgmt Dept will meet at least weekly to review the situation as the pandemic progresses and provide updates to the Cabinet who will notify local school district superintendents of Level 2 and/or 3 actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coordinator of Health & Safety, after consultation with the Orange County Commissioner of Health, will explain details to Cabinet of the suspension of certain activities, including sporting events, field trips, fine art performances and other large group activities as specified by the Orange County Commissioner of Health. • The Coordinator of Health & Safety, after consultation with the Orange County Commissioner of Health, will explain details to Cabinet that activities at district cafeterias, dining and other rooms i.e. (faculty rooms) be suspended as ordered by the O. C. Commissioner of Health. • The Coordinator of Health & Safety, after consultation with the Orange County Commissioner of Health, will explain details of the order to Cabinet to close school as a means to prevent the further spread of pandemic influenza. • The Coordinator of Health & Safety, after consultation with the Orange County Commissioner of Health, will explain details to Cabinet of the order to re-open schools. Issue parent letter # 5. • Return to Heightened Surveillance Reporting.

Table 3 – Orange Ulster BOCES Pandemic Preparedness Activities rev 4

page 2 of 2

Planning & Preparation	Level 1 Anywhere inside North America (Except New York)	Level 2 Anywhere in New York (In addition to Level 1 actions)	Level 3 In Orange County (In addition to Level 2 actions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with County of Orange DOH Public Health Officials to determine whether the schools should be cleaned differently or more often if a pandemic occurs. • Consider alternate learning strategies such as collaborative agreements with public television or local cable access stations, teleconferencing, lessons on CDs or online for children with Internet access at home. • Review the health needs of students. Some students may have a greater risk of infection. Encourage those families to talk to their health care provider. Some may need to be more cautious in keeping children out. • Acquire HEPA Air Filter Units and N-95 respirators for Health Offices and School Nurses, surgical masks, disinfecting wipes for O & M staff to sanitize door knobs and other surfaces and waterless hand sanitizer systems for faculty, staff, students and visitors. • Train nurses, faculty and staff in flu-symptom recognition. • Remember that a person who is infected doesn't show symptoms right away. Children who are getting ill may exhibit different behavior than usual, such as eating less or being irritable. • Educate staff, students and parents about the differences between annual/seasonal flu, bird flu or any flu-like illness, and what could occur in a pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post flu prevention signs throughout school facilities and administrative offices. • Encourage all students, faculty and staff to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating. When hand washing is not possible, school should consider providing hand sanitizing rubs that contain at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based sanitizers cause skin dryness, irritation, rashes so provide an emollient, lotion or cream for moisturizing. • Make sure any additional cleaning is carried out the building and not targeted to one classroom or site; this will prevent the inadvertent identification of the student with the suspected contagious condition. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue monitoring the national situation through communication with County of Orange and NYS Departments of Health. • If students get sick again start Level 3 procedures again.



FACT SHEET

Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

How Germs Spread

The main way that illnesses like colds and flu are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This is called "droplet spread."

This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Sometimes germs also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.

How to Stop the Spread of Germs

In a nutshell: take care to

- Cover your mouth and nose
- Clean your hands often
- Remind your children to practice healthy habits, too

Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

The "Happy Birthday" song helps keep your hands clean?

Not exactly. Yet we recommend that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. That's about the same time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice!

Alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers work too

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.*

* Source: FDA/CFSAN Food Safety A to Z Reference Guide, September 2001: [Handwashing](#).

Germs and Children

Remind children to practice healthy habits too, because germs spread, especially at school.

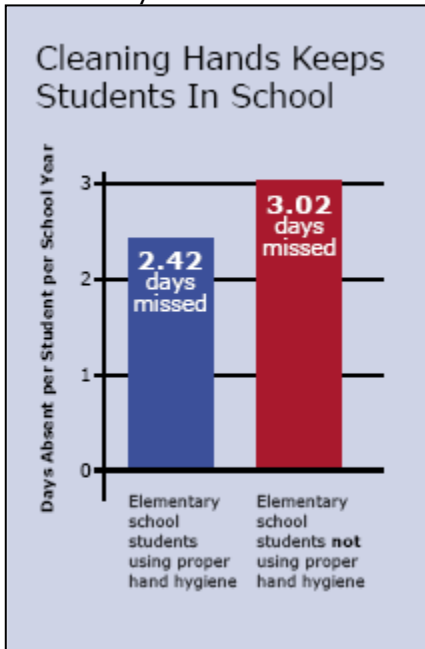
February 1, 2004

Page 1 of 2

Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

(continued from previous page)

The flu has caused high rates of absenteeism among students and staff in our country's 119,000 schools. Influenza is not the only respiratory infection of concern in schools -- nearly 22 million school days are lost each year to the common cold alone. However, when children practice healthy habits, they miss fewer days of school.



School administrators, teachers and staff: See [Preventing the Spread of Influenza \(the Flu\) in Schools](#) for CDC interim guidance.

More Facts, Figures, and How-Tos

CDC and its partner agencies and organizations offer a great deal of information about handwashing and other things you can do to stop the germs that cause flu, the common cold, and other illnesses. See [Other Resources](#) and [Posters](#) on this [Stop the Spread of Germs](#) site for a select listing of Web sites, materials, and contact information.

Source: Am J Infect Control 2000;28:340-6.

Stop the Spread of Germs in Schools Fast Facts

- Approximately 1/5 of the U.S. population attends or works in schools. (U.S. Dept of Ed, 1999).
- Some viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes up to 2 hours or more on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. (Ansari, 1988; Scott and Bloomfield, 1989)
- Nearly 22 million school days are lost annually due to the common cold alone. (CDC, 1996)
- Addressing the spread of germs in schools is essential to the health of our youth, our schools, and our nation.
- Students need to get plenty of sleep and physical activity, drink water, and eat good food to help them stay healthy in the winter and all year.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu, or call the CDC Flu Information Line at (800) CDC-INFO.

February 1, 2004

Page 2 of 2

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION
SAFER • HEALTHIER • PEOPLE™

SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS A- OUTBREAK

- We know this is an anxious time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We are working closely with local health officials to deal with the situation and will keep parents updated with any important information.
- At this time, under the guidance of the county health department, we believe students can safely attend classes and schools will remain open. Our thoughts are with all of our families and children who are affected.
- If pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, health officials may need to close schools for an extended period of time (for example, up to 12 weeks).
- The purpose of closing schools will be to decrease contact among children in order to decrease their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection. If schools are closed, children should stay at home.
- We urge parents to plan now for the possibility of schools closing. Arrange day care, and home schooling.
- Parents can help protect their children and prevent the spread of pandemic flu as they would colds and other flu by taking the following precautions:
 - Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
 - Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
 - Teach your children to stay away from people who are sick and stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- We will make public announcements through the media and parents can call the school at (845)-291-0100.
- **You can get more information from the Orange County Department of Health:**
 - Visit online at <http://www.co.orange.ny.us/> or call the Health Information Line: 845-291-2332.

SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS B- SCHOOL CLOSURES

- Orange County health officials have ordered the closure of schools as a result of the pandemic flu outbreak in our county.
- Schools may be closed for an extended period of time (for example, up to 12 weeks).
- We know this is a difficult time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We are working closely with health officials to deal with the situation and will keep parents updated with any important information.
- Because pandemic flu is easily spread from person-to-person, it is unsafe for large groups of people to gather and children should stay home. The purpose of closing schools is to decrease contact among children in order to decrease their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection.
- During this time, children and adults should stay away from other people and groups, as much as possible. Health officials also advise people should not gather in other locations such as homes, shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.
- Parents can help protect their children and prevent the spread of pandemic flu as they would colds and other flu by taking the following precautions:
 - Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
 - Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
 - Teach your children to stay at least three feet from people who are sick and stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Recommendations may change during the course of a flu pandemic. We will make public announcements through the media and parents can call the school at (845) 291-0100.
- **You can get more information from the Orange County Department of Health:**
Visit online at <http://www.co.orange.ny.us/>
or call the Health Information Line: (845) 291-2332.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE A:

Health Services will use this type of press release to announce schools remain open

For release (DATE)

Contact: (PIO name and number)

Orange County schools are open but parents should prepare

Orange County schools remain open despite the pandemic flu outbreak in the county but parents are asked to prepare for possible closures if the virus continues to spread.

School and county health officials are working together to monitor the situation and parents will be updated with any important information.

"At this time, we believe students can safely attend classes and schools will remain open. Our thoughts are with all of our families and children who are affected," said (health official)

If the pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, health officials say they may need to order schools closed for a period of time. They urged parents to begin planning now for childcare in their home.

Health officials say parents can help protect their children and prevent the spread of pandemic flu as they would colds and other flu by taking the following precautions:

- Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet from people who are sick. People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are better.

Health officials point out that recommendations may change during the course of a pandemic flu outbreak. For school updates, parents can call the school district at (845) 291-0100 or the Orange County Health Services' Health Information Line at (845) 291-2332.

For more information on pandemic flu, visit Orange County Health Services' website at <http://www.co.orange.ny.us/> or the federal government website at www.pandemicflu.gov.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE B:

Health Services will use this type of press release to announce school closures
A similar press release will be issued when school reopens

For immediate release (DATE)

Contact: (PIO name and number)

Health officials order closure of schools in Orange County

Orange County health officials have ordered the closure of schools as a result of the pandemic flu outbreak in the county.

Schools may be closed for a period of time - days or even weeks. Because the virus is easily spread from person-to-person, Orange County Department of Health has also ordered colleges, day care centers and preschools to close. Because it is unsafe for large groups of people to gather, health officials warn people to stay away from shopping malls, community centers and other places where germs can be spread.

"We know this is an anxious time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We are working closely with the schools to deal with the situation and will keep parents updated with any important information," said (Local Health Official)

According to LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIAL, the purpose of closing schools is to limit contact among children to decrease their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection.

Because so many people are sick with the flu, health officials acknowledge that it may be hard to get a doctor's appointment, go to a clinic or even be seen in a hospital emergency room. They provided some tips for residents to care for the sick at home:

- Have them drink a lot of liquid (juice, water)
- Keep the sick person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For adults with fever, sore throat and muscle aches, use ibuprofen (Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.
- Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently.
- Keep the people who are sick with the flu away from the people who are not sick.

More information on pandemic flu is available on the **Orange County Department of Health** online at <http://www.co.orange.ny.us/> or call the Health Information Line at (845) 291-2332.

PANDEMIC PLANNING TIPS FOR PARENTS: If Our Schools are Closed

During a flu pandemic, schools may be ordered closed by state or local health authorities. Your children may have to stay home for possibly for up to 12 weeks. You may not be able to go to work due to company closures and you may have to stay home to take care of your children because they should not be exposed to groups of other people.

You and your children may not be able to go to places of public assembly such as arenas, athletic events in schools, places of worship, restaurants, shopping malls, or theatres.

Websites for Ideas for Further Educating your Children at Home

www.amnh.org/kids/?src=toolbar

www.computerlearning.org/

www.education.noaa.gov/coolsites/html

www.loc.gov/families

www.vtnea.org/vtnea12.htm

<http://nasadln.nmsu.edu/dln/>

www.nea.org/parents/ppower.html

www.nps.gov/webrangers

www.smithsonianeducation.org/students/idealabs/smithsonian_kids.html

www.whitehouse.gov/kids

Parent Letter # 1 - Prevention Letter

Use this letter to help prepare parents for pandemic flu – before there are human pandemic flu or bird flu cases in the U.S.

Dear Parents,

This letter will help your family prepare for an influenza pandemic that could make many people sick.

A pandemic is a global disease epidemic. Pandemics happen when a new virus emerges that is able to spread rapidly from person to person and make a lot of people sick. Currently, there are concerns about the highly pathogenic H5N1 “bird flu” virus that has caused human illness and deaths in other parts of the world. Right now, this virus doesn’t spread easily from one person to another, but it is possible it could mutate (change) and be able to do that. It is also possible that another new flu virus will turn up. Three influenza pandemics occurred in the 20th Century, and experts worry that another could happen at any time.

Public health officials want people to protect themselves against pandemic flu now by learning healthy habits that help to reduce the spread of germs.

- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are better.
- Teach your children to wash their hands often. Washing with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds is ideal. That’s about as long as it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
- Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer. Gels, rubs and hand wipes all work well, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Hand wipes must be disposed of properly. Always read and follow label instructions when using hand sanitizer.
- Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve—not your hands!

Enclosed with this letter is a checklist to help families get ready for an influenza pandemic. This information can also help your family get ready for any kind of emergency.

Please stay informed and be prepared. You may get information online at www.pandemicflu.gov, www.nyhealth.gov,

You can get more information from the Orange County Department of Health:

Visit online at <http://www.co.orange.ny.us/> or call the Health Information Line: 845-291-2332.

PARENT LETTER #2 - FIRST BIRD CASE

Use this letter to help prepare parents for pandemic flu after first bird case is found in U. S.

Even though the confirmation of a bird infected with avian/bird flu in the United States does not signal a pandemic, there will be confusion and concern when this happens. Use this letter to help parents understand the significance of what has happened.

Dear Parents,

Birds infected with the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian flu virus have been identified in the United States. You may have heard that this "Bird Flu" virus has caused illness and death in many parts of the world. It is important to note that most people who got sick had close contact with infected birds. Therefore, even though this bird flu is now in the United States, it does NOT mean that a lot of people here will get sick. At this time, there are no known human cases of bird flu in the United States. There are simple things we can do to protect ourselves.

To reduce the risk of bird flu, please make sure all your family members take these common sense precautions:

- Do not touch sick or dead birds.
- If you MUST pick up a sick or dead bird (for example, if one is on your doorstep) never use your bare hands. Pick up the bird with a shovel, or wear gloves. Wash your hands immediately after removing your gloves.
- Regularly clean bird feeders and birdbaths while wearing gloves.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after coming in contact with bird droppings.
- If you pick up droppings, use a shovel, "pooper scooper," or gloves. Never use your bare hands.
- Try to avoid contact with dirt or grass that is soiled with bird droppings.
- Teach children to always wash their hands after playing outside.
- After being outside where droppings are present, take off shoes or other footwear before entering the home.

You may also have heard that some scientists are worried that the H5N1 bird flu virus might someday cause an influenza pandemic in humans (a worldwide epidemic). To cause a pandemic, the virus would have to mutate so that it could spread easily from one person to another. Bird flu does not do that right now. Bird flu is hard for people to catch. Still, it makes sense to be prepared!

Enclosed with this letter is a checklist to help families get ready for an influenza pandemic or any kind of health emergency. Be aware. Be prepared. Stay informed!

You can get more information from the New York State Department of Health: www.nyhealth.gov

The federal government website with information on planning for individuals and families:
www.pandemicflu.gov

American Red Cross:
www.redcross.org

You can get more information from the Orange County Department of Health:
Visit online at <http://www.co.orange.ny.us/> or call the Health Information Line: 845-291-2332.

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

Initial Pandemic Flu Outbreak #3: Use this letter to let parents know schools are open

Dear Parents,

This letter will give you information about a flu outbreak in Orange County. Every year, some people get sick with the flu during the fall and winter months. This year, there is a new flu virus that is making many people in Orange County sick. So many people are sick in Orange and the United States that health officials call it a "pandemic flu."

A lot of students and teachers in our school are sick with the flu. We hope they will all get better quickly.

At this time, the county health department tells us that students who are not ill can safely come to school. The schools will remain open. We will keep you updated with any important information.

To keep the flu from spreading to more people, we ask you to keep sick children home. Any children who are sick in school will be sent home.

Public health officials want you to protect yourself and your family against pandemic flu. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands a lot with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay away at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and stay away from other people until they are better.
- Stay away from shopping malls, movie theaters or other places where there are large groups of people.

We are also giving you some tips about how to care for your family if they are ill.

If you have questions, please contact your School Nurse or health care provider. You can call the school at (845) 291-0100. You can get more information from the Orange County Department of Health online at <http://www.co.orange.ny.us/> or call the Health Information Line at (845) 291-2332.

If the pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, schools may close for days or weeks. The purpose of closing schools will be to keep children from getting sick. If schools are closed, children should stay at home. Begin planning now for childcare in your home.

Recommendations may change during the course of a pandemic flu outbreak.

LETTER TO PARENTS #4 - “School Closure”

Use this letter to inform parents schools are closed

Dear Parents,

Health officials have advised that all schools in Orange County should close immediately until further notice and children should stay home. Schools may be closed for as long as 12 weeks to reduce contact among children and stop the spread of the pandemic influenza virus that is having such a serious health impact.

We know this many people are sick and others are very worried. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in this difficult time for our community.

Because the virus is easily spread from person-to-person, it is not safe for large groups of people to gather. During this time, both children and adults should stay away from other people and groups as much as possible. They should not gather in crowded locations such as shopping malls, movie theaters or community centers.

We know that it may be hard to get a doctor’s appointment, go to a clinic or even be seen in a hospital emergency room. The health department has provided the following advice for helping those who are sick with the flu:

- Have them drink a lot of liquid (juice, water)
- Keep the sick person as comfortable as possible. Rest is important.
- For fever, sore throat or muscle aches, use over-the-counter pain relievers. Choose either name brands or store brands—either choice is fine. CAUTION: Check with a health care provider if you think there may be a medical reason, such as an allergy, not to give these products to the sick person. NEVER give aspirin to someone under 20 years of age because of the possibility of a dangerous side effect called Reye’s syndrome.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.
- Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently with soap and water. If you go out in public, carry hand sanitizer and use it often. Rubs, gels or wipes are all effective, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Always dispose of hand wipes properly. Use hand sanitizer according to label instructions.
- Keep your hands away from your face. The flu virus can live a long time on surfaces such as hand rails and door knobs and easily be transferred from your hands to your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Keep the people who are sick with the flu away from the people who are not sick.

We will contact you as soon as we have information about when school will reopen. Please stay informed by paying attention to media reports.

You may also get information at www.pandemicflu.gov, www.nyhealth.gov,

You can get more information from the Orange County Department of Health online at <http://www.co.orange.ny.us/> or call the Health Information Line at (845) 291-2332.

LETTER TO PARENTS #5 - “School Re-Opens”

Use this letter to inform parents schools are re-opened.

Dear Parents,

Health officials have declared the influenza pandemic is under control. Our school will open again on [DATE]. At this time, students may safely return to class if they have no flu-like symptoms.

Because the flu spreads easily from person-to-person, please keep children who have flu-like symptoms at home. Symptoms include: fever of more than 100 degrees F. **and** cough or sore throat. Don't send sick children to school—they will be excluded from class and sent home.

Even though school is re-opening, there are still some people who are sick. Health officials say that influenza pandemics sometimes happen in waves. This means more people could become sick in the weeks or months ahead. If more people do get sick, schools may need to close again. We will continue to give you any important information.

We are looking forward to seeing your children again.



Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist for Individuals and Families

You can prepare for an influenza pandemic now. You should know both the magnitude of what can happen during a pandemic outbreak and what actions you can take to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. This checklist will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

1. To plan for a pandemic:

- ☐ Store a supply of water and food. During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.
- ☐ Ask your doctor and insurance company if you can get an extra supply of your regular prescription drugs.
- ☐ Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- ☐ Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will 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.

2. To limit the spread of germs and prevent infection:

- ☐ Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water, and model the correct behavior.
- ☐ Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, and be sure to model that behavior.
- ☐ Teach your children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick. Stay home from work and school if sick.



3. Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:

Examples of food and non-perishables	Examples of medical, health, and emergency supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, and soups<input type="checkbox"/> Protein or fruit bars<input type="checkbox"/> Dry cereal or granola<input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter or nuts<input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruit<input type="checkbox"/> Crackers<input type="checkbox"/> Canned juices<input type="checkbox"/> Bottled water<input type="checkbox"/> Canned or jarred baby food and formula<input type="checkbox"/> Pet food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment<input type="checkbox"/> Soap and water, or alcohol-based hand wash<input type="checkbox"/> Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen<input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer<input type="checkbox"/> Anti-diarrheal medication<input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins<input type="checkbox"/> Fluids with electrolytes<input type="checkbox"/> Cleansing agent/soap<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight<input type="checkbox"/> Batteries<input type="checkbox"/> Portable radio<input type="checkbox"/> Manual can opener<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage bags<input type="checkbox"/> Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers

www.pandemicflu.gov



What is Pandemic Flu?

A “pandemic” is a disease that spreads all over the world and affects a large number of people. If you are caring for a loved one during a pandemic, it’s important to take steps to protect yourself and others. Always follow the most current advice of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and your local health department.

Prevent the Spread of Pandemic Flu

These healthy habits will help keep you and others from getting and passing on the virus.

- > Clean your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- > Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and clean your hands afterward. Put used tissues in a wastebasket.
- > Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don’t have a tissue.
- > Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth to prevent germs from entering your body.

Also, a person with signs of the flu should:

- > Stay home from work, school and errands and avoid contact with others.
- > Consider wearing a surgical mask when around others. There may be benefits.

When a Household Member Is Sick

The flu virus is spread when contaminated droplets exit the mouth and nose of an infected person and the virus comes in contact with others. So, follow these tips to protect yourself and others in your home:

- > Keep everyone’s personal items separate. All household members should avoid sharing computers, pens, papers, clothes, towels, sheets, blankets, food or eating utensils.
- > Disinfect door knobs, switches, handles, toys and other surfaces that are commonly touched around the home or workplace.

Disinfectant:

1 gallon water
¼ cup bleach

Mix up a fresh batch every time you use it.

- > It is okay to wash everyone’s dishes and clothes together. Use detergent and very hot water. Wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.
- > Wear disposable gloves when in contact with or cleaning up body fluids.
- > One person should be the caregiver. He or she may benefit by wearing a mask when giving care.

Practice Hand Hygiene

Caregivers should always wash their hands before providing care. Afterward, wash again and apply alcohol-based hand sanitizer as well. Follow these steps for proper hand hygiene:

1. Wet hands with warm, running water and apply liquid soap.
2. Rub hands vigorously for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces and fingers.
3. Scrub nails by rubbing them against the palms of your hands.
4. Rinse your hands with water.
5. Dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel and use it to turn off the faucet. A shared towel will spread germs.

Recognize Pandemic Flu Symptoms

Watch for these symptoms:

- > Fever
- > Cough
- > Runny nose
- > Muscle pain

Call your health-care professional at the first sign of the flu. Many symptoms can be treated by the health-care professional over the telephone.

Care for a Loved One with the Flu

A person recovering from flu should have:

- > Rest and plenty of liquids
- > No alcohol or tobacco
- > Medications to relieve flu symptoms

In some cases, a health-care professional may prescribe antiviral drugs to treat the flu. Antibiotics (like penicillin) don’t cure it.

Monitor Pandemic Flu Symptoms

Keep a care log. Write down the date, time, fever, symptoms, medicines given and dosage. Make a new entry at least every 4 hours or when the symptoms change. Call your healthcare professional again if your loved one has:

- > A high fever
 - Children and Adults:
Greater than 105°F (40.5°C)
 - Babies 3- to 24-months-old:
103°F (39.4°C) or higher.
 - Babies up to 3 months:
Rectal temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- > Shaking chills
- > Coughing that produces thick mucus
- > Dehydration (feeling of dry mouth or excessive thirst)
- > Worsening of an existing serious medical condition (for example: heart or lung disease, diabetes, HIV, cancer)

If you cannot reach your health-care professional, **call 9-1-1** or local emergency number for any of the signs below:

- > Irritability and/or confusion
- > Difficult breathing or chest pain with each breath
- > Bluish skin
- > Stiff neck
- > Inability to move an arm or leg
- > First-time seizure

Prevent Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when the body loses too much water and it's not replaced quickly enough. It can be serious. Begin giving soothing drinks at the first signs of the flu and follow these tips:

- > In addition to plenty of liquids, give ice and light, easily digested foods, such as soup and broth.

- > If your loved one has diarrhea or vomiting, give fluids that contain electrolytes. These are available at your pharmacy or grocery store. Or you can make your own rehydration electrolyte drink for someone over the age of 12.

Electrolyte Drink:

1 quart water
 ½ tsp. baking soda
 ½ tsp. table salt
 3 to 4 tbsp. sugar
 ¼ tsp. salt substitute
 Mix well and flavor with lemon juice or sugar-free Kool-Aid®.

- > If drinking liquids makes nausea worse, give one sip at a time until your loved one can drink again.

Reduce Fever

To help reduce a fever, do the following:

- > Give plenty of fluids.
- > Give fever-reducing medication, such as acetaminophen, aspirin or ibuprofen, as directed on the container's label.
Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20.
- > Keep a record of your loved one's temperature in your care log.
- > To relieve discomfort, give a sponge bath with lukewarm water.

After you have called your doctor or emergency number for a fever, continue to follow the home treatment recommendations above. If there is a delay in getting help, ask a health-care professional if you should start an additional dose of an alternate fever-reducing medication (acetaminophen, ibuprofen or aspirin) between the doses described on the label. Always continue to give plenty of fluids.

Prepare for a Flu Pandemic

Make a plan now for a flu pandemic. Figure out what you will do if members of your household have to stay home from work or school or stay separated from others for a period of time. Keep extra supplies of food, water, medications and your disaster supply kit on hand.

Pandemic Flu Caregiving Supplies:

- > Thermometer
- > Soap
- > Box of disposable gloves
- > Acetaminophen
- > Ibuprophen
- > Bleach
- > Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- > Paper towels
- > Tissues
- > Surgical masks
(one for each person)
- > Sugar, baking soda, salt, salt substitute

For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter, visit www.redcross.org or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

Many of the recommendations in this brochure are from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care or current public health advice. Seek advice from your health-care provider, the CDC and your local health department. Visit www.pandemicflu.gov.

As with all medications and treatments, there are side effects and potential complications. Seek professional advice from your health-care professional to make sure any medication or vaccination is appropriate to your health.

Pandemic Influenza:

CHARACTERISTICS & CHALLENGES

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide.

Historically, the 20th century saw three pandemics of influenza:

- 1918 influenza pandemic caused at least 500,000 U.S. deaths and up to 50 million deaths worldwide
- 1957 influenza pandemic caused at least 70,000 U.S. deaths and 1-2 million deaths worldwide
- 1968 influenza pandemic caused about 34,000 U.S. deaths and 700,000 deaths worldwide

Characteristics and Challenges in a Pandemic:

1. There Will Be Rapid Worldwide Spread

- When a pandemic influenza virus emerges, its global spread is considered inevitable.
- Preparedness activities should assume that the entire world population would be susceptible.
- Countries might, through measures such as border closures and travel restrictions, delay arrival of the virus, but cannot stop it.

2. Health Care Systems Will Be Overloaded

- Most people have little or no immunity to a pandemic virus. Infection and illness rates soar. A substantial percentage of the world's population will require some form of medical care.
- Nations unlikely to have the staff, facilities, equipment and hospital beds needed to cope with large numbers of people who suddenly fall ill.
- Death rates are high, largely determined by four factors: the number of people who become infected, the virulence of the virus, the underlying characteristics and vulnerability of affected populations and the effectiveness of preventive measures.
- Past pandemics have spread globally in two and sometimes three waves.

3. Medical Supplies Will Be Inadequate

- The need for vaccine is likely to outstrip supply.
- The need for antiviral drugs is also likely to be inadequate early in a pandemic.
- A pandemic can create a shortage of hospital beds, ventilators and other supplies. Surge capacity at non-traditional sites such as schools may be created to cope with demand
- Difficult decisions will need to be made regarding who gets antiviral drugs and vaccines.

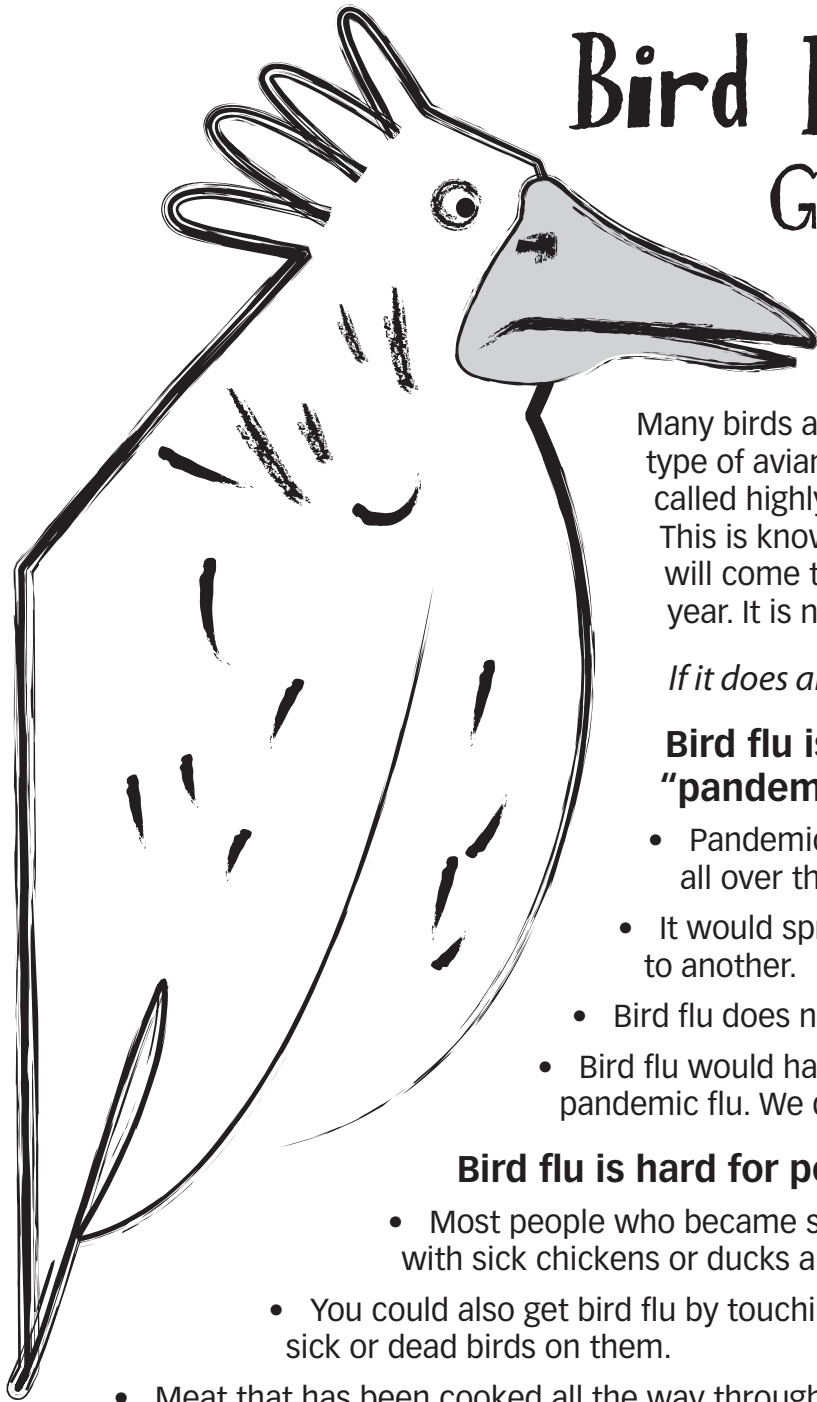
4. There Will Be Economic and Social Disruption

- Travel bans, closings of schools and businesses and cancellations of events could have major impact on communities and citizens.
- Care for sick family members and fear of exposure can result in significant worker absenteeism.

www.pandemicflu.gov

Bird Flu and You

Get the Facts!



Many birds around the world are getting sick from a type of avian influenza that causes many bird deaths, called highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1. This is known as "bird flu." Experts think HPAI H5N1 will come to the United States, maybe even this year. It is not here now.

If it does arrive here, you should know:

Bird flu is not the same thing as "pandemic flu."

- Pandemic flu would make lots of people sick all over the world.
- It would spread easily from one person to another.
- Bird flu does not do that.
- Bird flu would have to change form to become pandemic flu. We don't know if this will ever happen.

Bird flu is hard for people to catch.

- Most people who became sick with bird flu came into contact with sick chickens or ducks and touched them with bare hands.
- You could also get bird flu by touching things that had droppings from sick or dead birds on them.
- Meat that has been cooked all the way through cannot give you bird flu.

Even though bird flu isn't here right now, you should never touch wild birds with your BARE HANDS.

- Birds can carry many kinds of germs that can make us sick.
- A bird could look fine and still be sick.
- If you **MUST** handle a sick or dead bird, wear gloves and wash your hands afterwards.

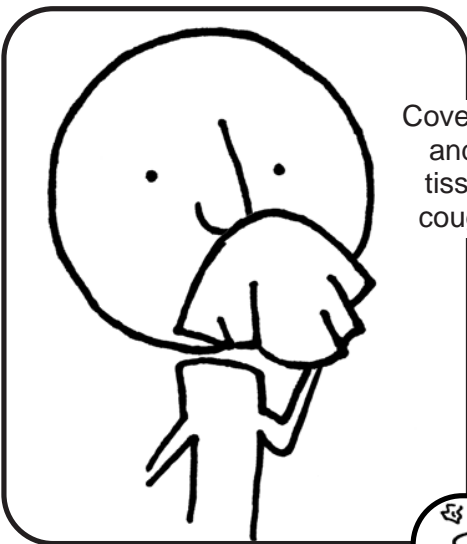
To learn more about bird flu, visit
www.nyhealth.gov



H5N1 Avian Influenza

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

Cover your Cough

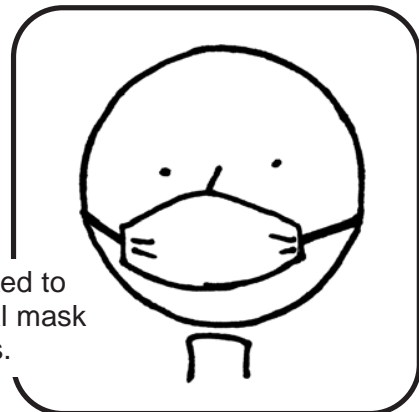


Cover your mouth
and nose with a
tissue when you
cough or sneeze

or
cough or sneeze into
your upper sleeve,
not your hands.



Put your used tissue in
the waste basket.



You may be asked to
put on a surgical mask
to protect others.

Clean your Hands

after coughing or sneezing.



Wash with
soap and water

or
clean with
alcohol-based
hand cleaner.



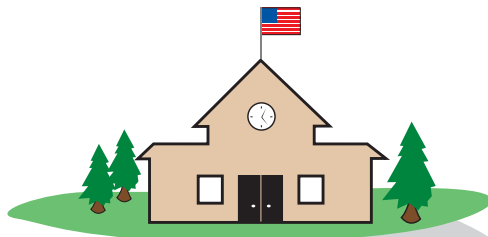
Minnesota Department of Health
717 SE Delaware Street
Minneapolis, MN 55414
612-676-5414 or 1-877-676-5414
www.health.state.mn.us



Minnesota
Antibiotic
Resistance
Collaborative



Keep Our School Healthy



**Send
sick kids
home**



- **Teach kids not to cough on others**



- **Teach kids to wash hands often, with soap.**



- **Teach kids to cover their coughs.**



COVER MOUTH AND NOSE



CLEAN HANDS

Cover Coughs and Sneezes. Clean Hands.

Be a germ stopper at school — and home. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue and throw it away.

Clean your hands a lot

- After you sneeze or cough
- After using the bathroom
- Before you eat
- Before you touch your eyes, mouth or nose

Washing hands with soap and water is best. Wash long enough to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice. Or, use gels or wipes with alcohol in them. This alcohol kills germs!

Stop germs. And stop colds and flu.



www.cdc.gov/germstopper

Stopping the **Flu** is up to You!

The flu is spread from person-to-person when someone who has the flu sneezes, coughs or even talks. The flu virus is put into the air and may be inhaled by anyone close by. Occasionally a person may become infected by touching something with the virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.



For more helpful information contact Contra Costa Health Services - 1-888-959-9911 - cchealth.org



To protect yourself and your family from the flu:

Wash your hands often with soap and warm water.

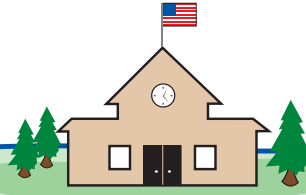
Use tissue when you cough, sneeze or spit, and dispose of the tissue in a covered trash bin.

Keep hands away from your face.

Clean shared space more often such as phone receivers, keyboards, steering wheels and office equipment.

Do not share personal items such as forks, spoons, toothbrushes and towels.

Avoid crowds or people who are ill.



Germ-Free Zone



- **Don't spread germs.**



- **Cover your cough.**



- **Wash your hands often.**

Stop Disease



Alto a las enfermedades

막으십시오
질병을

Ngừa
Bệnh

病氣撲滅

Pigilan ang
Sakit

防止疾病

Keep our School Healthy



**Teach kids not to
cough on others**



**Teach kids to wash hands
often, with soap**



**Teach kids to
cover their coughs**

Keep your GERMS to Yourself!



Don't spread germs



Cover your cough



Wash your hands often

KEEP YOUR **GERMS** TO **YOURSELF**

Use a tissue or
cough and sneeze
into your upper arm.

We'll all feel better!



www.nyhealth.gov
www.pandemicflu.gov

An illustration of two hands being washed, with several light blue and green bubbles floating around them. The background is a gradient of blue and light blue.

KEEP YOUR **GERMS** TO **YOURSELF**

Wash your hands with soap
and hot water, or use a
waterless hand cleanser after:

- Blowing your nose or coughing
- Using the bathroom
- Being near someone who is ill.

We'll all feel better!

www.nyhealth.gov
www.pandemicflu.gov

7096

07/06

Keep your germs to yourself.

STAY HOME

and avoid close contact with others.

Think you have the flu?
Think you should try to go
to work or school, anyway?
THINK AGAIN!

www.nyhealth.gov
www.pandemicflu.gov

Stopping the Flu is up to you!

The flu is spread from person-to-person when someone who has the flu sneezes, coughs or even talks. The flu virus is put into the air and may be inhaled by anyone close by. Occasionally a person may become infected by touching something with the virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.



To protect yourself and your family from the flu:

Wash your hands often with soap and warm water.

Use tissue when you cough, sneeze or spit, and dispose of the tissue in a covered trash bin.

Keep hands away from your face.

Clean shared space more often such as phone receivers, keyboards, steering wheels and office equipment.

Do no share personal items such as forks, spoons, toothbrushes and towels.

Avoid crowds or people who are ill.