

## What is an Influenza Pandemic?

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity, and for which there is no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person, causes serious illness and death, and can sweep across the country and around the world in very short time.

It is difficult to predict when the next influenza pandemic will occur or how severe it will be. Wherever and whenever a pandemic starts, everyone around the world is at risk.

## What is Avian Flu or Bird Flu?



- Avian Influenza or Bird Flu is a flu caused by avian influenza viruses, which occur naturally among birds. **Birds get bird flu.**
- It is **rarely** transmitted to people and only then to those who work closely with the infected birds.
- It is **not transmitted** by birds flying over your house.
- You **cannot get the virus from eat-**

**ing chicken** unless the chicken had the flu and only then if the chicken was not cooked to 165° F. This is the temperature you should always cook chicken—flu or not.

- If Avian Influenza comes to the United States, it might mean that some birds would be destroyed and the cost of poultry may go up but **very few people would get sick or die.**

## What is the Connection Between Avian Influenza and Pandemic Influenza?

**People are very confused about this connection.**

Even if the bird flu comes to the United States, it does not mean we are having a pandemic. It only means that a lot of birds may be destroyed.

In the past, a number of flu viruses have developed in animals like birds or swine and then have mutated enough to become the kind of virus that humans get and can spread from person to person.

If the avian influenza virus becomes able to transmit human to human and it is a virus that is very different from any other virus humans have encountered before, it may spread very quickly and could become a pandemic.

## How Can I Plan for a Pandemic?

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.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has developed a website that provides comprehensive information on pandemic and avian influenza:

[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)


This site also contains Pandemic Influenza Planning checklists for:

- Businesses,
- Individuals and families,
- Healthcare; and
- Community Organizations.

Things that you can do now to prepare include:

- **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 as well, such as power outages and disasters.



- **Have any prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand**, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- **Have a supply of surgical masks on hand.** You can get them from medical supply stores, some pharmacies, and online. 
- **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. District Seven Health Department has developed a Medical Reserve Corps and is recruiting volunteers to help during all types of emergencies. To learn more about the Medical Reserve Corps, call District Seven Health Department or visit our website.
- **Get involved** in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic. To learn more about the planning efforts in our area, please visit the District Seven Health Department website or call any member of District Seven Health Department's Health Preparedness Team.



**For more information about  
Pandemic Influenza, you can contact:**

# How Can I Protect Myself and My Family During an Influenza Pandemic?

The United States Centers for Disease Control, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, and District Seven Health Department will alert you if pandemic influenza is occurring. ***If pandemic influenza is occurring, the following methods of protection should be taken:***

	<p><b><u>TIMELY PROTECTION</u></b> Start these precautions before the first case hits the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start when the first case hits the United States.</li> <li>• If the pandemic has started anywhere in the world, wear surgical masks and practice these methods when traveling into areas where a potential infection could enter the country (i.e. international airport).</li> </ul>
	<p><b><u>DISTANCE</u></b> Consider everyone that is outside of your own family as potentially infected. Distance yourselves from others by not going into public places (school, religious events, cultural events, sporting events, other public events or places, etc.).</p>
	<p><b><u>SURGICAL MASK</u></b> Most often, the flu virus is transmitted through inhaling flu particles. A tight-fitting surgical mask (resistant to fluids) provides protection against the virus and must be worn at all times when you or your families are in contact with individuals outside of your family.</p>
	<p><b><u>HAND WASHING</u></b> The flu virus can live up to two days on surfaces. If you touch the surface and then your mouth or eyes before washing, you can spread the virus. You must wash your hands frequently. Anti-bacterial soap or alcohol based hand cleaners are most effective.</p>
	<p><b><u>TISSUES and COUGHING or SNEEZING</u></b> Cough or sneeze into a tissue. This reduces the number of droplets in the air and reduces the risk of spreading a potential infection to others.</p>
	<p><b><u>EDUCATE</u></b> Share these principles with all those around us. Start with your families and extended families. Share them with your co-workers and those that provide services to your work places. Help others to follow this plan.</p>

District Seven Health Department  
254 E Street  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
(208) 522-0310  
[www2.state.id.us/phd7](http://www2.state.id.us/phd7)

**Other sites where you can access  
information on pandemic or avian  
flu, or general preparedness  
information include:**

<http://www2.state.id.us/phd7>

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov>

<http://www.ready.gov>

<http://www.redcross.org>

## Preparing for a Pandemic: Methods of Protecting Individuals and Families During a Pandemic Influenza Outbreak