

President's Letter

My fellow Americans,

Once again, nature has presented us with a daunting challenge: the possibility of an influenza pandemic.

Most of us are accustomed to seasonal influenza, or "the flu," a viral infection that continues to be a significant public health challenge. From time to time, changes in the influenza virus result in a new strain to which people have never been exposed. These new strains have the potential to sweep the globe, causing millions of illnesses, in what is called a pandemic.

A new strain of influenza virus has been found in birds in Asia, and has shown that it can infect humans. If this virus undergoes further change, it could very well result in the next human pandemic.

We have an opportunity to prepare ourselves, our Nation, and our world to fight this potentially devastating outbreak of infectious disease.

The National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza presents our approach to address the threat of pandemic influenza, whether it results from the strain currently in birds in Asia or another influenza virus. It outlines how we intend to prepare, detect, and respond to a pandemic. It also outlines the important roles to be played not only by the Federal government, but also by State and local governments, private industry, our international partners, and most importantly individual citizens, including you and your families.

While your government will do much to prepare for a pandemic, individual action and individual responsibility are necessary for the success of any measures. Not only should you take action to protect yourself and your families, you should also take action to prevent the spread of influenza if you or anyone in your family becomes ill.

Together we will confront this emerging threat and together, as Americans, we will be prepared to protect our families, our communities, this great Nation, and our world.

GEORGE W. BUSH
THE WHITE HOUSE
November 1, 2005

Pandemic Influenza—Get Informed...Be Prepared!

This guide is designed to help you understand the threat of a pandemic influenza outbreak in our country and your community. It describes common sense actions you can take now in preparing for a pandemic. We cannot predict how severe the next pandemic will be or when it will occur, but being prepared may help lower the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family.

What You Need to Know

An influenza (flu) pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of flu disease that occurs when a new type of influenza virus appears that people have not been exposed to before (or have not been exposed to in a long time). The pandemic virus can cause serious illness because people do not have immunity to the new virus.

Pandemics are different from seasonal outbreaks of influenza that we see every year. Seasonal influenza is caused by influenza virus types to which people have already been exposed. Its impact on society is less severe than a pandemic, and influenza vaccines (flu shots and nasal-spray vaccine) are available to help prevent widespread illness from seasonal flu.

Influenza pandemics are different from many of the other major public health and health care threats facing our country and the world. A pandemic will last much longer than most flu outbreaks and may include "waves" of influenza activity that last 6-8 weeks separated by months. The number of health care workers and first responders able to work may be reduced. Public health officials will not know how severe a pandemic will be until it begins.

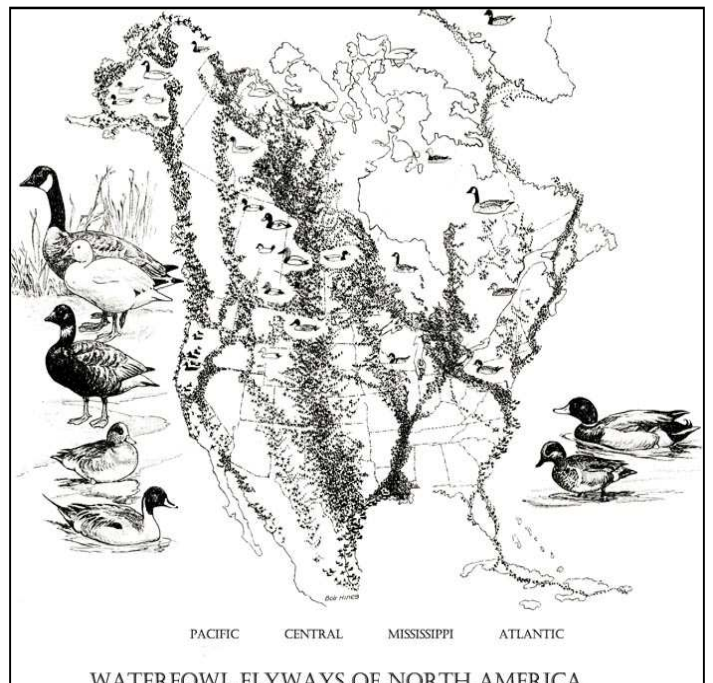
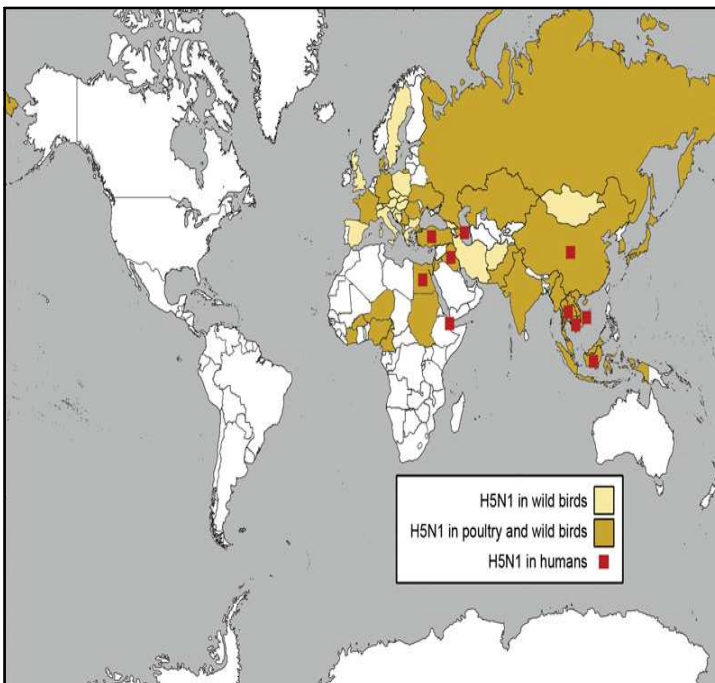
A Historical Perspective

In the last century there were three influenza pandemics. All of them were called pandemics because of their worldwide spread and because they were caused by a new influenza virus. The 1918 pandemic was especially severe.

- 1918-1919 Most severe, caused at least 675,000 U.S. deaths and up to 50 million deaths worldwide.
- 1957-1958 Moderately severe, caused at least 70,000 U.S. deaths and 1-2 million deaths worldwide.
- 1968-1969 Least severe, caused at least 34,000 U.S. deaths and 700,000 deaths worldwide.

Some Differences Between Seasonal Flu and Pandemic Flu

Seasonal Flu	Pandemic Flu
<p>Caused by influenza viruses that are similar to those already circulating among people.</p>	<p>Caused by a new influenza virus that people have not been exposed to before. Likely to be more severe, affect more people, and cause more deaths than seasonal influenza because people will not have immunity to the new virus.</p>
<p>Symptoms include fever, headache, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, and muscle pain. Deaths can be caused by complications such as pneumonia.</p>	<p>Symptoms similar to the common flu but may be more severe and complications more serious.</p>
<p>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).</p>	<p>Healthy adults may be at increased risk for serious complications.</p>
<p>Every year in the United State, on average:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu; • More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications • About 36,000 people die from flu. 	<p>The effects of a severe pandemic could be much more damaging than those of a regular flu season. It could lead to high levels of illness, death, social disruption, and economic loss. Everyday life could be disrupted because so many people in so many places become seriously ill at the same time. Impacts could range from school and business closings to the interruption of basic services such as public transportation and food delivery.</p>



Importance and Benefits of Being Prepared

- The effects of a pandemic can be lessened if you prepare ahead of time.
- Preparing for a disaster will help bring peace of mind and confidence to deal with a pandemic.

When a pandemic starts, everyone around the world could be at risk. The United States has been working closely with other countries and the World Health Organization (WHO) to strengthen systems to detect outbreaks of influenza that might cause a pandemic.

- A pandemic would touch every aspect of society, so every part of society must begin to prepare.

All have roles in the event of a pandemic. Federal, state, tribal, and local governments are developing, improving, and testing their plans for an influenza pandemic. Businesses, schools, universities, and other faith-based and community organizations are also preparing plans.

- As you begin your individual or family planning, you may want to review your state's planning efforts and those of your local public health and emergency preparedness officials. State plans and other planning information can be found at www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/checklists.html.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other federal agencies are providing funding, advice, and other support to your state. The federal government will provide up-to-date information and guidance to the public if an influenza pandemic unfolds. For reliable, accurate, and timely information, visit the federal government's official Web site at www.pandemicflu.gov.

Pandemic Influenza - Challenges and Preparation

- As you and your family plan for an influenza pandemic, think about the challenges you might face, particularly if a pandemic is severe.
- **You can start to prepare now to be able to respond to these challenges.**

The following are some challenges you or your family may face and recommendations to help you cope. In addition, checklists and other tools have been prepared to guide your planning efforts. A series of planning checklists can be found at www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/checklists.html.

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.

Essential Services You Depend on May Be Disrupted

- Plan for the possibility that usual services may be disrupted. These could include services provided by hospitals and other healthcare facilities, banks, restaurants, government offices, telephone and cellular phone companies, and post offices.
- Stores may close or have limited supplies. The planning checklists can help you determine what items you should stockpile to help you manage without these services
- Transportation services may be disrupted and you may not be able to rely on public transportation. Plan to take fewer trips and store essential supplies.
- Public gatherings, such as volunteer meetings and worship services, may be canceled. Prepare contact lists including conference calls, telephone chains, and email distribution lists, to access or distribute necessary information.
- Consider that the ability to travel, even by car if there are fuel shortages, may be limited.
- You should also talk to your family about where family members and loved ones will go in an emergency and how they will receive care, in case you cannot communicate with them.
- In a pandemic, there may be widespread illness that could result in the shut down of local ATMs and banks. Keep a small amount of cash or traveler's checks in small denominations for easy use.

Medical Care for People with Chronic Illness Could be Disrupted

In a severe pandemic, hospitals and doctors' offices may be overwhelmed.

- If you have a chronic disease, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, or depression, you should continue taking medication as prescribed by your doctor.
- Make sure you have necessary medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment.
- Talk to your healthcare provider to ensure adequate access to your medications.
- If you receive ongoing medical care such as dialysis, chemotherapy, or other therapies, talk with your health care provider about plans to continue care during a pandemic.

A "Family Emergency Health Information Sheet" is provided in this guide and at:

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/planguide/familyhealthinfo.html>

Pandemic Influenza - Prevention and Treatment:

Stay Healthy—These steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as the flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze—throw the tissue away immediately after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based (60-95%) hand cleaner.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If you get the flu, stay home from work, school, and social gatherings. In this way you will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs often spread this way.

Vaccination—Vaccines are used to protect people from contracting a virus once a particular threat is identified. After an individual has been infected by a virus, a vaccine generally cannot help to combat it. Because viruses change over time, a specific pandemic influenza vaccine cannot be produced until a pandemic influenza virus emerges and is identified. Once a pandemic influenza virus has been identified, it will likely take 4-6 months to develop, test, and begin producing a vaccine.

While there is currently no human pandemic influenza in the world, the federal government is facilitating production of vaccines for several existing avian influenza viruses. These vaccines may provide some protection should one of these viruses change and cause an influenza pandemic. The supply of pandemic vaccine will be limited, particularly in the early stages of a pandemic. Efforts are being made to increase vaccine-manufacturing capacity in the United States so that supplies of vaccines would be more readily available. In addition, research is underway to develop new ways to produce vaccines more quickly.

Antiviral—A number of antiviral drugs are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat and prevent seasonal influenza. Some of these antiviral medications may be effective in treating pandemic influenza. These drugs may help prevent infection in people at risk and shorten the duration of symptoms in those infected with pandemic influenza. However, it is unlikely that antiviral medications alone would effectively contain the spread of pandemic influenza. The federal government is stockpiling antiviral medications that would most likely be used in the early stages of an influenza pandemic and working to develop new antiviral medications. These drugs are available by prescription only.

Stay Informed—Knowing the facts is the best preparation. Identify sources you can count on for reliable information. If a pandemic occurs, having accurate and reliable information will be critical.

- Reliable, accurate, and timely information is available at [ww.pandemicflu.gov](http://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.
- Look for information on your local and state government Web sites. Links are Available to each state department of public health at www.pandemicflu.gov.
- Listen to local and national radio, watch news reports on television, and read your

- newspaper and other sources of printed and web-based information.
- Talk to your local health care providers and public health officials.

Questions and Answers:

Is it safe to eat poultry?

- Yes, it is safe to eat properly cooked poultry. Cooking destroys germs, including bird flu viruses. The United States maintains trade restrictions on the importation of poultry and poultry products from countries where the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza strain has been detected in commercial or traditionally raised poultry, not in wild or migratory birds.

Guidelines for the safe preparation of poultry include the following:

- Wash hands before and after handling food.
- Keep raw poultry and its juices away from other foods.
- Keep hands, utensils, and surfaces, such as cutting boards, clean.
- Use a food thermometer to ensure food has reached the safe internal temperature - in all parts of the bird. Cook poultry to at least 165°F to kill food-borne germs that might be present, including the avian influenza virus.

For more information, see poultry preparation fact sheets at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Poultry_Preparation_Fact_Sheets/index.asp

What types of birds can carry bird flu viruses?

- Avian influenza viruses can infect chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese, and guinea fowl, as well as a wide variety of other birds, including migratory waterfowl.
- Each year, there is a flu season for birds just as there is for humans and, as with people, some forms of the flu are worse than others, depending on how strong the virus. A weak virus may cause only mild illness in infected poultry and birds but a strong virus could cause severe and extremely contagious illness, and even death, among infected poultry and birds.

Will the seasonal flu shot protect me against pandemic influenza?

- No, it won't protect you against pandemic influenza. But flu shots can help you to avoid seasonal flu.
- Get a flu shot to help protect you from seasonal flu.
- Get a pneumonia shot to prevent secondary infection if you are over the age of 65 or have a chronic illness such as diabetes or asthma. For specific guidelines, talk to your health care provider or call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline at 1-800-232-4636.
- Make sure that your family's immunizations are up-to-date.



Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist for Individuals & 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. **Food and Water Supplies May Be Interrupted and Limited.**

1. To plan for a pandemic:

- Store a **two to three week** supply of water, food and medicine. 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.
- 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.
- Being able to work may be difficult or impossible—Ask your employer how business will continue during a pandemic. Discuss staggered shifts or working at home with your employer. Discuss telecommuting possibilities and needs, accessing remote networks, and using portable computers. Discuss possible flexibility in leave policies. Discuss with your employer how much leave you can take to care for yourself or a family member. Plan for possible loss of income if you are unable to work or the company you work for temporarily closes.
- School may be closed for an extended period of time—Plan home learning activities and exercises. Talk to your child's teacher/school. Have materials, such as books, on hand. Also plan recreational activities that your children can do at home. Consider childcare needs.
- 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 demonstrate that behavior. Disease transmission can be from handshakes, door knobs, telephones, pens at grocery stores or doctor sign-in forms, computers, car door handles and gas station pumps.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, and be sure to demonstrate 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.
- Disinfect door knobs, switches, handles, toys and other surfaces commonly touched around home, car or workplace. Carry disinfectant wipes or Alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash in your car.

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

<u>Examples</u> of food and non-perishables	<u>Examples</u> of medical, health and emergency supplies
<input type="checkbox"/> Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish <input type="checkbox"/> fruits, vegetables, beans, 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"/> Water—enough for 1 gallon per day per person for a minimum of 14 days (21 days recommended by The American Red Cross) <input type="checkbox"/> Canned or jarred baby food <input type="checkbox"/> Formula for infants <input type="checkbox"/> Pet food and water <input type="checkbox"/> Food for infected persons such as—chicken broth, soups, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Salt Substitute (ex. Morton Salt Substitute) <input type="checkbox"/> Salt <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar <input type="checkbox"/> Baking soda <input type="checkbox"/> CASH <input type="checkbox"/> FUEL <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription medication <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins <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 and disposable diapers Care Giver Supplies: <input type="checkbox"/> Soap and water for hand washing <input type="checkbox"/> Disposable latex or vinyl gloves <input type="checkbox"/> Surgical masks for each person <input type="checkbox"/> Disinfectant wipes <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash <input type="checkbox"/> Bleach <input type="checkbox"/> Disinfecting agent/Laundry soap <input type="checkbox"/> paper towels <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer <input type="checkbox"/> Medicines for fever and flu symptoms, such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, Chloraseptic, Robitussin and Tums, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-diarreal medication <input type="checkbox"/> Fluids with electrolytes (also in frozen pops) <input type="checkbox"/> Recipe for electrolyte solution (see food list; recipe provided—see flu care guide) <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____



Avian Influenza Care Guide

Recognize Avian 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 Avian 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 health-care 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.

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

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.

You can make your own re-hydration electrolyte drink for someone **over** the age of 12.

ELECTROLYTE DRINK

1 quart water

1/2 tsp. baking soda

1/2 tsp. table salt

3-4 tbsp. sugar

1/4 tsp. salt substitute

Mix ingredients 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 ones 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.

Red Cross: Prepare for bird flu

Organization advises to stock up on water, food; central Illinois could see virus as early as September

Sunday, July 9, 2006

BY CLARE HOWARD

OF THE JOURNAL STAR

PEORIA - Avian flu pandemic could hit central Illinois as early as September with migratory birds flying down the Illinois River waterway, and health officials are recommending households have two to three weeks of supplies in the event of widespread quarantines.

"Health organizations all over the world are watchful for the spread. This virus is mutating so fast. No one knows, but the theory behind pandemic is that this is a whole new flu strain and everyone is vulnerable," said Anne Fox, chief executive officer of American Red Cross Central Illinois Chapter.

"Without sending an alarm, no one knows how widespread disruptions will be. Maybe transportation will be affected. Maybe it will impact supply lines.

"We need to be prepared to be self-sustaining as a community. In a normal disaster, people help each other. That may not be possible during a pandemic flu."

Normally, the Red Cross recommends households have three days of supplies. With the threat of pandemic flu and possible interruption of basic services, the Red Cross is recommending up to three weeks of supplies including food, water and medicine.

"We're told to expect the flu to strike in waves at about six-week intervals," Fox said, noting that 40 percent of the population could be sick or absent from work caring for sick family members.

American Red Cross Central Illinois Chapter covers six counties with 385,000 people. The organization is planning for illness and absenteeism to affect up to 160,000 people in the region.

Alyssa Pollock, disaster preparedness coordinator with American Red Cross Central Illinois Chapter, said, "We plan for bulk feeding, but we're not sure of our own supply chain. Plan A means all grocery stores are operational. Plan B means we deliver food. Plan C coordinates with restaurants."

Both Fox and Pollock encourage individual households to prepare with stockpiled water, food and medicine.

Red Cross volunteer Jean Larke is a disaster preparedness specialist and knows how disrupted supply lines and quarantines affect households. She has instructed her granddaughter Emily Larke, 16, that in the event of avian flu pandemic, both patient and caregiver should wear face masks to cut down on disease transmission. "Have a minimum supply of 14 days of food and medications. Besides prescriptions, we have Tylenol, Chloraseptic, Robitussin, Tums, Imodium for diarrhea and thermometers," she said.

She also has a recipe for an electrolyte drink like Gatorade in the event vomiting and diarrhea result in dehydration.

"Dehydration from vomiting and diarrhea is part of avian flu. You need to replace those fluids," Larke said. "Prepare so you don't have to go to the grocery store. People go to grocery stores even when they feel sick, so that becomes a place for disease transmission."

Disposable gloves, antibacterial soap and disinfectant hand wipes also are recommended for supplies at home, the car and the workplace.

Fox suggests people get into the habit now of extra hand washing. Disease transmission can be from handshakes, door knobs, telephones, pens at grocery stores or doctor sign-in forms, computers, car door handles and gas station pumps.

"Keep hands off your eyes, nose and lips. Practice good hygiene, and be aware of precautions," Fox said.

"Proper hand washing means soap between fingers, back of hands and under fingernails for a period as long as it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday.' Use the paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.

"We are teaching people to be observers. Watch for the glass of water served with fingers over the top of the glass. Just be more aware of what you touch and what you put in your mouth."

The Red Cross recommends a gallon of water a day per person and per pet. Stock nonperishable food, canned goods and a hand-operated can opener in the event of power outages.

People in other countries have routinely used face masks, even when they walk in public, but Americans have resisted. However, health officials here now warn face masks should be part of supplies in preparation for flu pandemic.

The Red Cross and other central Illinois health organizations have worked for more than a year on emergency plans for dealing with avian flu pandemic. The operative phrase is "not if but when."

Avian flu has a high mortality rate, but the unknowns about this disease are as disturbing as the documented statistics. The virus is mutating so rapidly, medical authorities are on heightened alert for the first U.S. cases.

According to statistics compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in early July, there were 229 confirmed cases of avian flu worldwide and 131 fatalities, a mortality rate of 57 percent.

Dr. Thembi Conner-Garcia, internist with Methodist Medical Center, said if pandemic flu hits central Illinois, she recommends people stay at home if possible, even if they are not sick.

"If you are not needed at work, stay home," she said.

The earlier in the season the flu strikes, the more prolonged and severe it is expected to be. If it is late winter before outbreaks occur, it's expected to be short lived and give scientists time next summer to formulate a vaccine.

So far, transmission has been primarily from birds to humans, but Conner-Garcia said at least one documented case in Asia was traced from child to mother.

Dr. William Scott, assistant clinical professor at the University of Illinois and medical director of the Center for Occupational Health at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center, said, "My expectation is we are susceptible to a pandemic situation. It is possible and probable. When and where and how intense is speculation, but it is foolish to think we are immune."

Peoria City/County Health Department has information on the virus on its Web site and will track the progression and post critical information for the public.

"All of us in emergency preparedness look at our national complacency. We are so blessed to have what we do, and we don't think this could happen here. But on Sept. 10, no one anticipated Sept. 11. With Hurricane Katrina, people did not react even with one week's notice. Try to use those terrible emergencies. Don't think this (flu pandemic) couldn't happen here," said R. Jason Marks, emergency preparedness coordinator with the health department.

The Red Cross is working with area businesses on emergency planning.

Debra Sheehan, vice president of human resources at CEFCU, said the credit union is planning for the worst-case scenario with up to 40 percent of its work force out sick. That is unprecedented, she said.

CEFCU employees in non-critical areas will be reassigned to essential jobs, she said. The focus is to maintain service without interruption. The credit union headquarters near the Greater Peoria Regional Airport has backup electric generation in the event of power outages, she said. Sheehan said CEFCU is investigating the contingency plans its vendors have formulated. "We need to be sure cash is supplied to our ATMs," she said.

Fox said, "This is bigger than any one agency can handle. This could be our worst flu season since 1918, but there is a lot individuals can do themselves to be prepared and be self-sustaining." △