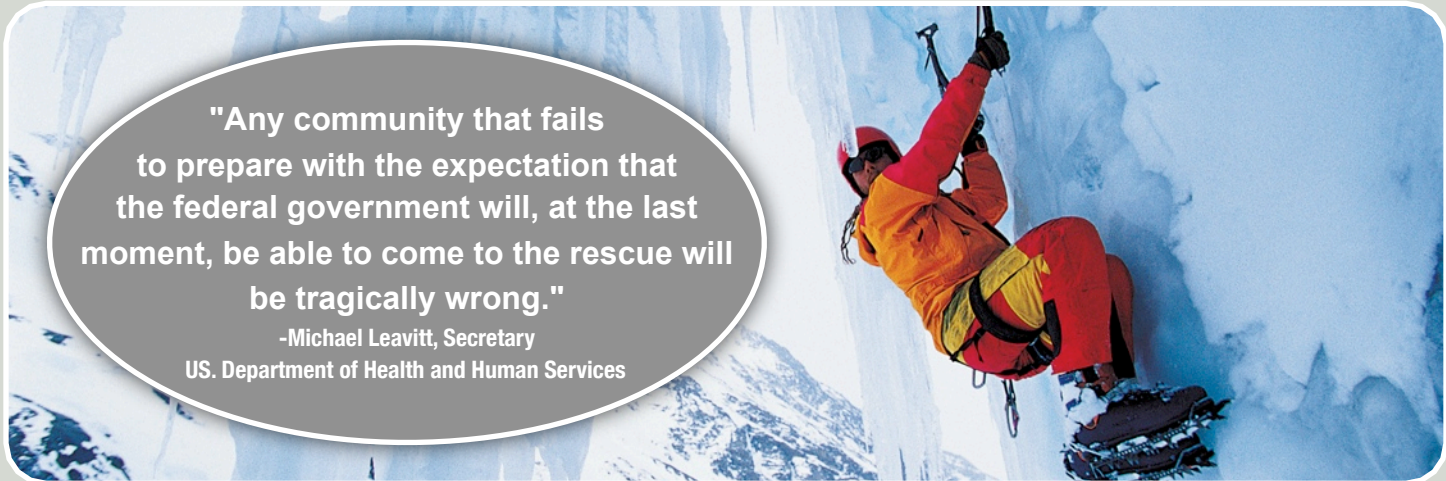


BE PREPARED FOR PANDEMIC FLU

We have “God-given time” to prepare...

Dr. David Nabarro, UN



"Any community that fails to prepare with the expectation that the federal government will, at the last moment, be able to come to the rescue will be tragically wrong."

-Michael Leavitt, Secretary
US. Department of Health and Human Services

THE LAST TIME WE WERE CLOSER TO A PANDEMIC, WE WERE IN A PANDEMIC.

"There will be a pandemic sooner or later.

It could start any time.

We have a virus capable of replicating inside humans.

We have a virus that humans are not resistant to.

We have a virus about which we don't understand everything.

It is at this stage of a pandemic alert that we have the luxury of being able to be prepared."

- Dr. David Nabarro, Senior UN Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza

"The situation is worsening with each passing month and the threat of an influenza pandemic is continuing to grow every day."

- Dr. Shigeru Omi, World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for the Western Pacific

"Each household will be dependent on itself for water for food and so on. I might be painting a black picture, but I think we have to think in those terms.... H5N1 ... is the most dangerous, the most highly lethal virus that I have ever encountered."

- Dr. Robert Webster, Director, U.S. Collaborating Center (WHO) Rose Marie Thomas Chair Department of Infectious Diseases, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee

Q Why do I need to prepare NOW?

Can't I wait until the media tells me that a pandemic is starting?

A pandemic could start at any time and would begin infecting people over the world in just a few days, thanks to modern air travel. People exposed to the virus will be infectious for days before they feel ill. Our government warns us that we need to be prepared for disruptions in basic services, for school closings, for food shortages, for power outages and even the failure of our clean water supply. We need to prepare now because there will be no time when a pandemic comes. Stores cannot stock enough for us all to prepare at the last possible moment.

Q Is bird flu the same as pandemic flu?

Though birds don't catch just one strain of flu, the term **bird flu** is commonly used to refer to the H5N1 virus now circulating in wild birds, poultry, certain mammals, and, on occasion, humans. In humans, H5N1 is deadliest among children and young adults rather than the elderly. (Seventy percent of the dead thus far are under 25 years of age.) The term **pandemic flu** refers to any flu virus that causes a worldwide epidemic, which happened last in 1968. No one can predict when or whether H5N1 will fully adapt to humans and be the source of the next pandemic. However, experts are gravely concerned. They are making their own personal preparations and are urging others to prepare.

Q Why do I need to learn about pandemic flu?

This is the first time the public has been urged to get ready for a disaster as unpredictable as a pandemic — a disaster of unknown timing and severity. If H5N1 emerges as the next pandemic flu, there is a significant chance that its severity will surpass even the worst pandemic of the 20th century. The strain of pandemic flu that swept round the world in 1918 killed more

people in 18 months than all those who died in WWI and WWII put together. The 1918 virus had a fatality rate of around 2.5–5%. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the H5N1 virus is killing 58% of those infected. Even though most experts believe that this figure will drop significantly if the virus turns into a pandemic strain, no one has been able to come up with scientific evidence to support that as a certainty. Even if true, the fatality rate has a long way to drop from 58% to 2.5%.

Q Won't the government do this preparation for us?

Our federal government has told us that we will be on our own because federal, state, and local governments cannot help everyone at once. If 30% of the work force is out sick or caring for the sick, everything from hospitals to supermarkets to the power grid (and possibly the Internet) might not be functioning normally. How well we fare will depend on how well we have prepared.

Q What about promising vaccines I read about? Won't they protect us?

News of a successfully tested vaccine does not mean that we have beaten pandemic flu. Right now, the best estimates are that it will take at least six months from the start of a pandemic for a vaccine to be available, and, even then, there will not be enough to go around. More troublesome yet, the H5N1 virus mutates so quickly that today's vaccine may not protect against tomorrow's pandemic flu.

Q What should I do to prepare?

The federal government recommends stockpiling non-perishable food items, water, prescription medications, portable radios, batteries, flashlights, garbage bags, and manual can openers. Because we use just-in-time inventory systems, a flu pandemic today may be much more disruptive than a flu pandemic in the past. At pandemicflu.gov,

citizens are urged to have food and water on hand for two weeks, but many scientific and government experts agree that individuals might need to be prepared for six weeks or more. Each of us has a personal responsibility to prepare and not to count on someone else to do it for us.

Q Where can I get information about pandemic flu and how to prepare?

www.pandemicflu.gov
www.fluwikie.com
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>
<http://www.who.int>

Q How can I help my community?

Local communities will have to strengthen their resources in order to keep essential services running during a pandemic. Your local utilities, schools and hospitals should all be making plans. *Find out what is being done in your community and how you can help.*

Q What is the current situation?

The World Health Organization (WHO) has acknowledged occasional, though not sustained, human-to-human transmission. The disease has already adapted to infect dogs, cats, and pigs. Such adaptations increase the risk of a pandemic occurring.

Q How can I raise my community's pandemic influenza awareness?

Share this message with your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Some states and communities across the nation are being very proactive about getting the word out and encouraging personal preparedness. Those will be the states and communities prepared to cope.

Information in this brochure is based on resources available at the U.S. Government web site for pandemic flu (www.pandemicflu.gov) and on Flu Wiki (www.fluwikie.com), a repository for information created by knowledgeable volunteers. This flyer is distributed by Flu Wiki volunteers. PDF files of this document may be downloaded for print or email attachment from mindspinner.net or www.fluwikie.com.