



Children and Pandemic Flu: A Resource Sheet

What Is Pandemic Flu?

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 can sweep across the country and around the world in a 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. Countries might, through measures such as border closures and travel restrictions, delay arrival of the virus, but cannot stop it.

Health professionals are concerned that the continued spread of a highly pathogenic avian H5N1 virus across eastern Asia and other countries represents a significant threat to human health. The H5N1 virus has raised concerns about a potential human pandemic because:

- It is especially virulent
- It is being spread by migratory birds
- It can be transmitted from birds to mammals and in some limited circumstances to humans, and
- Like other influenza viruses, it continues to evolve.

Since 2003, a growing number of human H5N1 cases have been reported in Asia, Europe, and Africa. More than half of the people infected with the H5N1 virus have died. Most of these cases are all believed to have been caused by exposure to infected poultry. No sustained human-to-human transmission of the disease has been reported, but the concern is that H5N1 will evolve into a virus capable of human-to-human transmission. (Source: Pandemicflu.gov)

Why Is It Important to Address Children's Needs in Pandemic Flu Preparation?

To minimize injury or loss of life, it is very important to address pediatric concerns in relation to pandemic flu planning/preparation. Children are not "little adults;" in fact, they respond differently to illness than do adults (e.g. different heart rate depending on age) and require equipment and supplies in sizes fitting all ages of children. Medication dosages must be calculated based upon the child's weight rather than the standard unit dosages used for adults.

In addition to these physiological variations, children have different psychosocial needs than adults. For example, infants and young children often fear strangers and thus they may resist a healthcare provider's emergency care interventions. They also cannot give information about their problem or pain; hence parents or caregivers are typically the source of patient information.

The communities best prepared to handle a pandemic flu outbreak involving children are those with properly trained emergency personnel, sufficiently equipped ambulances and emergency departments, and well-defined pediatric treatment protocols and procedures.

Pandemic Flu Resources

The following resources might prove useful in preparing your organization, community, or family in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak. The information listed below does not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the EMSC National Resource Center or Children's National Medical Center.

Resource	Description
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) (http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/disasters.cfm)	The AAP provides health professionals with information on how to: help families plan their response to a disaster, ensure that children's needs are identified and addressed in disaster plans, and advocate for the individual needs of children and family-centered care to be included in disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery phases.
American Red Cross (http://www.redcross.org/news/ds/panflu/)	The Red Cross, in conjunction with communities throughout the country, has developed flu pandemic education and materials that can be easily understood and applied in any community or household.

Resource...

Description Continued...

Illinois EMSC - Disaster Preparedness Exercises Addressing the Pediatric Population (<http://www.luhs.org/depts/emsc/pedsexercisesdec06.pdf>)

This document is offered as a resource to organizations as they conduct disaster drills and tabletop exercises. Inclusion of infants and children in disaster drills and exercises is an essential component in preparedness efforts, and can assist in preparing an organization to treat critically ill or injured pediatric patients during an actual disaster or mass casualty incident.

Illinois EMSC - Pediatric Disaster Preparedness Guidelines (<http://www.luhs.org/depts/emsc/peddisasterguide.pdf>)

These guidelines are offered as a resource in addressing the needs of children during disaster planning. Please note that the recommendations in these guidelines do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care.

CDC Resources for Pandemic Flu (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/>)

This website provides resources to help hospital administrators and state and local health officials prepare for the next influenza pandemic.

National Advisory Committee on Children and Terrorism: Recommendations to the Secretary (<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/children/PDF/working/Recommend.pdf>)

This document provides recommendations on ensuring the safety of America's children and how to meet their physical, medical, psychological and social needs in the face of the threat of terrorism.

National Association of State EMS Officials (<http://www.nasemso.org/Resources/PandemicInfluenza.asp>)

This website includes a definition of a pandemic and the conditions that must be met for a pandemic outbreak to begin. A section is included on what the public should do in case such an event occurs, followed by resource links to federal, state, non-profit, and international sources of information. In addition, links are provided to reports and tools published by the CDC, the World Health Organization, and the National Academies of Science.

National Center for Disaster Preparedness - Pediatric Preparedness for Disasters and Terrorism: A National Consensus Conference. (<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/children/pdf/working/execsumm03.pdf>)

This summary focuses on how to plan and prepare for treating children during disasters and terrorism events. Subject areas covered include: Emergency and Prehospital Care, Hospital Care, Emergency Preparedness, Terrorism Preparedness and Response, Mental Health Needs, School Preparedness and Response, Training and Drills, and Future Research Agenda and Funding.

National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza (<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/homeland/pandemic-influenza.html>)

This report discusses the pandemic threat, the national strategy for pandemic influenza, and the three pillars of the national strategy.

New York Times - Health Section (<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/health/diseasesconditionsandhealthtopics/avianinfluenza/index.html>)

This webpage contains a collection of articles about avian influenza published in *The New York Times*. It includes easy-to-understand graphics and videos explaining pandemic flu, how it is spread, and its effects on humans.

PandemicFlu.gov (<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>)

This website provides one-stop access to all U.S. government avian and pandemic flu information.

World Health Organization (WHO) (http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/index.html)

WHO is coordinating the global response to human cases of H5N1 avian influenza and monitoring the corresponding threat of an influenza pandemic. Information on this page tracks the evolving situation and provides access to both technical guidelines and information useful for the general public.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
HHS Pandemic Influenza Plan (www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/)

The HHS Pandemic Influenza Plan is a blueprint for pandemic influenza preparation and response. It provides guidance to national, state, and local policy makers and health departments.