



PANDEMIC INFLUENZA INFORMATION FOR TRAVELERS AND THOSE LIVING ABROAD

Pandemic Influenza

- Pandemic influenza is a global outbreak caused by a new strain of flu virus.
- Experts predict a flu pandemic will occur, but it is difficult to forecast when it will occur.
- A pandemic may affect daily life for a period of time and could include school and business closings, as well as disruptions in the economy and everyday functions.

All personnel should maintain a basic level of preparedness for all potential hazards.

You are encouraged to get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan and be informed about what might happen.

Avian Flu

- Avian flu is a disease caused by bird flu viruses that primarily infect birds but may also infect other animals, including humans.
- Flu viruses mutate frequently and can infect other animals and humans.
- **Currently, H5N1, a specific type of avian flu virus, has not mutated to permit easy human-to-human transmission** despite the fact that more than 200 humans have been infected and more than 100 have died.

Current Situation

- Avian flu has been reported in wild and domesticated bird flocks in Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East.
- Avian flu cases in humans have been reported in Asia and Eastern Europe.

Transmission (Spread of Disease) and Symptoms

	Seasonal Flu	Avian Flu
Transmission	Spread through droplets expelled during coughing and sneezing.	Spread through contact with infected birds, their droppings or blood or surfaces exposed to them. However, due to the changing nature of flu viruses, it is possible that avian flu may mutate to spread from person to person.
Symptoms	High fever, headache, fatigue, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle aches, nausea (which may lead to vomiting and diarrhea)	Similar to those of seasonal flu but may include abdominal pain, chest pain, eye infections and severe respiratory diseases.
Who Is at Risk	Those 65 years or older, those who live in long-term care facilities or need regular medical attention, those prone to asthma or other respiratory conditions and young children (6–23 months)	People of all ages are at risk. Past pandemic influenza outbreaks suggest that healthy young adults, including pregnant women, may be most at risk of exposure.



ARMY STRONG.

Prevention

Flu viruses can be prevented by vaccines, antiviral medicines and good hygiene.

- Update flu shots and other vaccinations to boost immunity. Discuss potential side effects with your doctor.
- Get vaccinated every year because the vaccine is changed along with the mutating flu virus to help fight the most threatening strain.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Minimize contact with people who are ill.
- Properly cook poultry to destroy all germs, including the avian flu virus.

Vaccine and Treatment

- **Currently, there is no vaccine commercially available for the H5N1 avian flu virus;** however, several are in various phases of testing.
- Vaccines can be produced only after the pandemic strain appears.
- Antiviral medicines can treat some cases of avian flu.

Preparation

- Stay informed of potential risks and the latest medical guidance at your destination.
- Complete the emergency information page in your passport.
- Register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department Web site.
- Obtain adequate insurance that includes medical evacuation.
- Get a travel health kit that includes a thermometer and hand gel.
- For a “stay in place” response, stock a supply of water and food for at least three days.
- Be aware of local laws and emergency plans.

Emergency Response

- Be calm—stay informed and follow emergency plans.
- Practice infection control:
 - Good hygiene (especially washing hands)
 - Social distancing:
 - Limit direct contact by not shaking hands.
 - Telecommute or hold telephone or video conferences.
 - Maintain personal space of three feet or more.
- Limit exposure with sick people, and stay home if you are sick.
- Quarantine and isolation measures may be used to limit movement of people who may have been exposed to the disease and separate those infected with the disease.
- Report to your command if you are military or civilian personnel or a member of the selective reserves.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Ready Army—www.ready.army.mil
- American Red Cross—www.redcross.org
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—www.pandemicflu.gov
- U.S. Department of State—www.travel.state.gov/index.html
- World Health Organization (WHO)—www.who.int/topics/avian_influenza/en/

It's up to you. Prepare strong. Get an emergency supply kit with enough supplies for at least three days, make an emergency plan with your family and be informed about what might happen.

