

What is San Diego County Doing to Prepare for a Potential Pandemic Flu?

The County of San Diego is conducting year round surveillance of influenza. The PHS branches of Community Epidemiology, Immunization and Public Health Laboratory, along with the County of San Diego Veterinarian's Animal Laboratory, work with community partners on reporting and testing, monitoring, information sharing and response planning. For a copy of the County of San Diego Influenza Response Plan, visit www.sdpanicflu.org.



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Pandemic Flu Info Line: **1-888-633-1330**

www.sdpanicflu.org



**FLU: Pandemic/Bird
Plan. Prepare. Protect.**
County of San Diego

What should I do about Pandemic Flu?



Stay Well – Stay Well Informed



Basic Influenza Facts

What is Influenza?

Influenza (“flu”) is a virus that typically affects the nose, throat and lungs. The illness usually lasts between three and seven days and symptoms include fever, headache, cough, aches and sore throat. The symptoms of pandemic flu are similar to those of seasonal flu, but can be more severe.

How Does Pandemic Flu Start?

Flu viruses are constantly changing. Pandemic flu usually starts with a new flu virus (typically an animal flu virus like the bird flu) that has changed into a form that can easily infect, and be spread from person to person.

More people get sick because they have never been exposed to this virus before and their bodies cannot fight it off. This allows the virus to spread widely and cause illness among many people creating what is called a pandemic.

Bird viruses do not usually spread easily among people, but they can develop new characteristics that allow them to do so. This is more likely to happen when birds and humans live in close proximity to each other.

What is the Difference Between Seasonal Flu, Avian Flu and Pandemic Flu?

Seasonal Flu:

- Seasonal flu is a respiratory infection caused by an influenza virus easily spread from person to person.
- Every year over 200,000 people are hospitalized due to complications and about 36,000 Americans die from seasonal flu.
- An annual flu vaccine is the best way to protect against seasonal flu.

Avian Flu:

- Bird flu is also called avian flu and avian influenza.
- The bird flu in the news is caused by the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus.
- Bird flu is a virus spread between birds, especially migratory birds, chickens and other poultry.
- People who handle infected birds are at a higher risk for becoming sick.
- Antibiotics have no effect on, and seasonal vaccines do not protect you from bird flu.
- Bird flu has not yet been detected in San Diego County, but San Diego County is preparing for a potential outbreak.

Pandemic Flu:

- Pandemic flu usually starts with a new virus (typically an animal flu virus like the bird flu) that has mutated into a form that can easily infect humans.
- It causes a worldwide outbreak of serious illness that spreads from person to person.
- When a flu pandemic occurs, as many as one in every four people can get sick.
- No vaccine is commercially available for pandemic flu.

How Can I Prepare and Protect Myself and my Family?

There are several steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from influenza.

Stay Well Informed.

- Read about pandemic influenza and avian influenza from official sources such as San Diego County’s web site: www.sdpanicflu.org.
- Pay attention to news stories in the media.
- Local officials will work with the media to deliver important messages to the public about any local health issues.

Protect the Health of Our Community and Your Family:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. This may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser (at least 60% alcohol).
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill.
- If you will be traveling to areas affected with bird flu, avoid live bird markets, farms or direct contact with birds. For additional information concerning travel, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth because germs are often spread this way.
- An annual flu vaccine can reduce your risk of getting seasonal flu, but it will not protect you from avian flu.
- If you are ill with flu-like symptoms, stay home so you don’t pass it to others.