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**This issue focuses on pandemic planning and avian influenza updates.**

- **HHS releases draft influenza pandemic guidance on masks and antivirals for public comment until July 3, 2008.** The proposed guidance addresses the controversial topics of face mask and respirator use by individuals and families, antiviral use during a pandemic, and employer stockpiling of antivirals. To access documents, see <http://aspe.hhs.gov/panflu/antiviral-n-masks.shtml>.

#### Facemasks and respirators

The most important steps to protect against pandemic influenza are to limit close contact with others and practice good hygiene. These steps should be taken even if face masks and respirators are used.

- If entry into a crowded setting is unavoidable, a face mask should be used.
- If close contact (<6 feet) with someone who is ill with pandemic influenza is unavoidable, an N-95 respirator should be used.
- Ill persons should use a facemask if they must be in contact with others.
- HHS suggests that households each stockpile 20 respirators and that people who commute on public transit stockpile an additional 100 face masks; the estimated cost is \$35 to \$70 per household.

#### Antiviral use

Guidance on antiviral use during a pandemic will depend on the epidemiology of the pandemic and the antiviral supply at the time. Antiviral usage is currently recommended for the following settings:

- Containment of initial pandemic outbreaks overseas and in the U.S.
- Reduction of risk of introduction of infection into U.S. early in the pandemic through screening and prophylaxis of selected persons at U.S. borders.
- Treatment of persons with pandemic illness who would benefit from such treatment.
- Prophylaxis of high-risk healthcare and emergency services personnel for duration of pandemic.
- Post-exposure prophylaxis of low-risk healthcare and emergency services personnel, immunocompromised, and persons in residential group settings when an outbreak occurs.

#### Antiviral stockpiling by businesses

Nonpharmaceutical interventions such as isolation of ill persons and social distancing will be the first line of defense for employers during a pandemic.

- Employers are responsible for protection of their workforce and should not rely on government stockpiles.
  - HHS recommends that critical infrastructure employers consider stockpiling antivirals to protect frontline healthcare and emergency workers, workers who are needed to maintain essential community services, and overseas employees and operations in areas where federal pandemic response activities will not reach, and to provide early treatment for workers who fall ill.
- **Hawaii begins voluntary illness screening program for international air travelers.** While in flight, passengers are asked to complete questionnaires about illness symptoms and travel history. Persons with influenza-like symptoms are asked to submit a rapid flu test. If symptoms and travel history suggest the possibility of avian flu or other serious communicable disease, the CDC Quarantine Station in Hawaii would be alerted and ultimately determine the next steps. In the pilot, 149 passengers were screened in roughly 10.5 minutes. See <http://healthuser.hawaii.gov/health/about/pr/2008/08-50.pdf>.
  - **First clinical trial results for H5N1 whole-virus vaccine produced from cell culture published.** Cell culture technology potentially allows for more rapid mass production of vaccine after identification of a pandemic threat than does traditional egg-based technology. See *N Engl J Med* 2008;358:2573-2584 or <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/panflu/news/jun1208vaccine-jw.html>.
  - **Indonesia announces decision to stop sharing timely reports of human H5N1 cases and deaths.** See <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/avianflu/news/jun0508indonesia-br.html>.

#### Recommended Resources

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>; OC: <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/flu/surveillance.htm>;  
CA: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/VRDL/html/FLU/Fluintro.htm>;  
HHS: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>; General: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>



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