FLU PANDEMICS

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF THERE IS AN OUTBREAK

RESOURCE PACK

unite for children
About this Resource Pack

In the event of a major outbreak of avian influenza, or other strain of influenza, what will be its effect on families, the community and society as a whole? What can we do to prevent an outbreak happening in the first place, and to minimize its effects if it does happen?

This Resource Pack contains a range of materials to help young people to learn how to prevent the spread of influenza, and what to do if there is an outbreak. The materials focus on avian flu, but can be adapted in the event of an outbreak of a different strain of the illness. They explain what causes avian flu, why it is important to prevent its spread, and what steps can be taken to minimize its occurrence.

Lessons that we have learnt from avian flu are very relevant also to other strains of flu, including A(H1N1). In particular the materials emphasize the importance of good hygiene practices for containing the spread of the disease.

Included in the pack are two sets of learning materials for primary level children, and two sets for secondary. In each case, one set is designed for a regular teaching context, while the other has been adapted for a worst-case scenario where the disease is of pandemic proportions and schools have had to be closed. In that scenario the primary materials can be taught by a community member who is not a trained teacher, while the secondary materials can be used for self-study.

In addition, the pack includes a Bibliography of internet-based learning materials that educators and learners can use in the event of a breakdown of the education system due to an outbreak of any disease.

Finally, there is a very useful document, Facilitating Discussions that Inform, which includes a wide range of tips to help trainers improve their teaching techniques.

Who Might Use this Resource Pack?

The Resource Pack is designed for teachers, community members and older students in lower and upper secondary schools to understand about avian flu and other influenza strains, and the effects of an outbreak in the community. The two versions mean that materials can be used either by teachers in a regular teaching context or by anyone without specific training in the event of an outbreak causing breakdown in normal community and society organization.
Avian influenza, also commonly known as bird flu, is an infectious disease carried by birds. Because birds know no national boundaries, there is an increasing likelihood of the disease spreading worldwide and causing major outbreaks, or a pandemic.

Avian flu is caused by a virus known as H5N1, which was first identified in the mid-1990s. Since then, the virus has spread to more than 50 countries. Almost all birds infected by the virus will die within a few days. Fortunately, the virus does not transmit easily to humans, though there have been some cases.

More recently there has been the emergence of influenza A(H1N1). As with bird flu, this virus is spreading rapidly worldwide. Already there have been nearly 100,000 confirmed human cases in over 100 countries, though fortunately most of these have been mild and have resulted in fewer than 500 deaths.

So far there have not been any large-scale incidences of either of these diseases threatening the functioning of society. Nevertheless, we need to be prepared for the possibility, and this is why this Resource Pack has been written.

Data Source: WHO
Map Production: Public Health Information and Geographic Information System (GIS)
World Health Organization
What Everyone Should Know

About common flu:

- Influenza spreads around the world in seasonal epidemics. Each year up to 500,000 people die from ordinary outbreaks of flu.

- Typically, flu is transmitted through the air by coughs or sneezes. Often humans catch flu through touching something with the virus on it and then touching their own nose or mouth.

- Influenza viruses can be inactivated by sunlight, soap, disinfectants and detergents. This is why frequent hand washing reduces the risk of infection.

- When you are infected with any type of flu, you may have a fever (a body temperature above 38 °C), sore throat, cough, muscle aches and eye infections, and you may have difficulty breathing. How you feel will depend on the type of virus that you are infected with.

- There is a vaccine for most normal strains of flu that people get every year.

About avian flu:

- Avian or bird flu is caused by the H5N1 strain of influenza virus, which only began to infect humans in the 1990s.

- Avian flu is an infectious disease carried by birds. Some birds are affected by the disease more than other birds. The disease occurs worldwide.

- You can get avian flu if you have direct contact with infected birds, handle their wastes, and wade into water that contains their wastes. Bird droppings of sick birds can be infectious for up to 30 days.

- There is a vaccine for the normal or seasonal flu that many people get each year, but it is currently not effective against avian flu. There is also an avian flu vaccine for birds.

About influenza A(H1N1):

- Influenza A(H1N1) is a new strain of flu that spread very rapidly around the world during 2009.

- It is often known as swine flu, but we now know that it is rare for humans to catch it from pigs. Also, A(H1N1) cannot be spread by pork products, since the virus is not transmitted through food.
A(H1N1) is spread from human to human in the same way as ordinary flu is spread – most commonly through breathing in the virus from coughs and sneezes of an infected person.

Although A(H1N1) has the potential to turn into a pandemic, fortunately so far most cases have been mild and not many people have died.

There is no vaccine against A(H1N1) yet, though scientists are working hard to develop one.

You can help prevent the spread of all types of flu through good hygiene practices:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Influenza is spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. While at home, remember to rest and drink safe drinking water, tea, soup and other clean liquids.
- Cook meat thoroughly and wash any surface on which you prepare raw meat. Wash all utensils such as spoons and knives that touch uncooked meat; do not cook birds or animals that are sick; keep cooked food separate from uncooked meat or eggs.
- Wash the shells of eggs before you bring them into your cooking area.
- Avoid contact with infected or sick birds or animals, and avoid their wastes (faeces) and dust that may contain small particles of droppings.
- Keep poultry and animals away from your house and away from other birds and animals. Keep your poultry in pens and under a roof in order to avoid contact with other birds and people. Similarly, pigs should be kept away from poultry and other animals.
- Report any sick or dead poultry or animals to your local authorities.
- Wear protective clothes when you handle birds and animals. For example, you could wear a mask, gloves, apron or gown, and boots. Remember to take the protective clothing off before entering the house.
- Limit your movements if there is an outbreak of flu in your area. You should avoid going to farms and poultry markets if there are sick birds or animals in your community.
What is in the Resource Pack?

**Primary Level Lesson Plans (for teachers and non-teachers)**
A set of activities at Early Primary, Middle Primary and Upper Primary levels. Key themes covered include:
- Germs and the importance of handwashing
- The basics of bird flu
- Ways to prevent the spread of bird flu
- Transmission, prevention and safe poultry
- What we can do about bird flu

Each section includes individual and group activities, all necessary information and materials, notes on assessment, and ideas for extending the activities.

**Secondary Level Lesson Plans and Self-learning Module**
After a basic introduction to What Everyone Should Know, the body of the materials comprises four lessons:
- What Is Avian Flu?
- Why Is It Important to Prevent a Pandemic?
- How Can It Be Prevented?
- What Are the Key Issues?

Each lesson includes all necessary information and materials, individual and group activities, a summary and a list of further resources, and handouts to be used during the activities. The self-learning module also includes self-assessment exercises, with answers.

**Annotated Resource Lists**
A wide range of resources at kindergarten, primary and secondary school level that can be accessed by educators and learners if a major emergency occurred and the educational system was severely affected by such an occurrence. The lists contain possible sources for complete courses, parts of courses, and lesson plans as well as tools that can be used to develop course materials for core subjects in the basic education curriculum.

**Facilitating Discussions that Inform**, by Clayton R. Wright
This contains a wealth of information and tips on how to facilitate training sessions in a lively and effective way, suitable for any level. (Reproduced by permission of the author.)
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