

Seasonal & Pandemic Flu Preparedness Checklist
For Save the Children Country & Field Offices
January 11, 2011¹

Although the 2009 H1N1 (“Swine Flu”) pandemic ended in August 2010, the 2009 H1N1 virus continues to circulate in much of the world as one of several seasonal flu viruses. Although most people recover from flu at home without medical care, even healthy children and adults can get very sick, and can spread the flu to friends, co-workers, and family. We therefore suggest that:

If flu is present in your area:

- People promptly consult a health care provider for anyone with flu-like symptoms who is at greater risk of serious flu-related complications, and for anyone who has any “emergency warning signs.” (Please see the CDC 2-pager, “Flu & You”: www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/FluandYou_press.pdf).
- Anyone who has, either a fever (100F / 38C, or higher) or chills, and also has either a cough or sore throat, stay home (except to seek medical care), until the fever has been gone for at least 24 hours (while no longer using a fever-reducing medicine). This helps reduce transmission of flu among people.
- If flu immunization is available in your area, consider immunization for everyone 6 months of age and older, particularly for those at greater risk of serious flu-related complications and for those living with or caring for those at greater risk. (It is best to get immunized before the start of your local flu season.)

Pandemic flu

Flu pandemics are worldwide epidemics caused by new flu viruses from animals, which adapt to allow sustained person-to-person spread. Although the 2009 H1N1 (“Swine Flu”) pandemic was not severe, Save the Children and others remain concerned about the continuing threat posed by the H5N1 (“Bird Flu”) virus.

“The U.S. Government remains concerned about the possibility of a **severe** influenza pandemic resulting from changes to existing viruses.” “The new strain could cause a severe pandemic threatening economic and social structures worldwide.” “the H5N1 avian influenza is still a cause for concern.” “The vast majority of reported human infections have resulted from direct contact with avian influenza A (H5N1)-infected poultry. Although there is evidence to suggest very limited human-to-human transmission, primarily in family groups involving close exposure to a critically ill member, there is no evidence to suggest the virus can be easily transmitted from human-to-human in a sustained manner at the present time. However, HHS/CDC, the WHO, and the U.S. Department of State are concerned about the potential for this virus to adapt or mutate into a strain that could cause a severe, highly lethal influenza pandemic.”²

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² US Department of State fact sheet: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/flu/flu_1181.html. Also see WHO, Ten Concerns if Avian Influenza Becomes a Pandemic:

The threat posed by H5N1 has been ongoing since late 2003. As of January 10, 2011, WHO had reported 516 lab-confirmed human cases in 15 countries, including 306 deaths; with 48 of these cases and 24 of these deaths in 2010.³ There is no way of estimating the likelihood that H5N1 will evolve into a human pandemic virus. However, even though we do not expect a severe pandemic in the near future, we are obliged to prepare for that possibility.

Most Important Sites for News & Guidance

For further information on preparedness for a severe flu pandemic, please see:

- US Department of State Fact Sheet: *2009-H1N1, Pandemic Influenza, and H5N1*: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/flu/flu_1181.html,
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services summary guidance: *Plan Now to Be Ready for the Next Flu Pandemic*: www.flu.gov/professional/community/plannow.html, &

For Save the Children information & guidance on flu

- SaveNet: <https://savenet2.savechildren.org/op/ip/gss/Pages/AvianFluUpdates.aspx> &
- SC external site: www.savethechildren.org/publications/technical-resources/avian-flu/

For offices in the US: Authoritative updates on the global/US situation & official guidance

- www.cdc.gov/flu/ US CDC
- www.flu.gov/ US Department of Health & Human Services

For offices outside the US: Authoritative updates on the global situation & official guidance

- www.who.int/topics/influenza/en/ World Health Organization
- <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/> European CDC
- www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/files/87/countryinfo.pdf links to official sites of many countries.

For protecting staff health & business continuity planning

- *Influenza Pandemic Planning: Business Continuity Planning Guide*, Government of New Zealand, updated December 2009 (an excellent 66-page resource with practical tools): http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/MultipageDocumentTOC_14455.aspx (click on pdf)
- *Pandemic Preparedness Planning for US Businesses with Overseas Operations*, 4 page checklist, January 2007: www.flu.gov/professional/business/businessoversea.html
- Business Planning, US DHHS webpage: www.flu.gov/professional/business/index.html

For SC/NGO program preparedness & response

- www.coregroup.org/our-technical-work/initiatives/h2p CORE Group (A few key documents)
- www.pandemicpreparedness.org/ H2P (Many documents, in several languages)

www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic10things/en/index.html & U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Flu Pandemics: www.flu.gov/individualfamily/about/pandemic/index.html.

³ www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/index.html

Please send any question you may have to flu@savechildren.org

Save the Children Preparedness and Response

SC preparedness and response in country and field offices should focus on:

- Reducing health risks among SC staff and their families.
- Enhancing the capacity of SC staff to work with local partners to effectively implement interventions at family and community levels to reduce flu transmission, care for the ill, protect the continuity of key public health and humanitarian services, and address the needs of children.
- Enhancing preparedness for business continuity in all SC offices and departments.

Summary Preparedness Checklist of Priority Actions for SC Country & Field Offices⁴

Action	Comments / Resources	Persons Responsible & Current Status
I. Overarching Actions		
1. Influenza Point Persons (IPPs) in each office	Trusted health professionals (& back-ups in case primary IPPs are out of office) appointed & oriented to advise staff, SMT, etc. See Influenza Point Persons Roles and Responsibilities on SaveNet.	(SMT / CODs)
2. Pandemic Preparedness Plans (PPPs) updated	Pandemic Prep. Plans should address a range of severity (case fatality) scenarios, & should be an annex of the Emergency Preparedness Plan.	Influenza Point Persons (IPPs)
3. Coordination of plans & actions with local partners	Coordination of planning & response with local government, UN, Red Cross/ Crescent, & NGO partners, etc.	(IPPs)
4. SC International	Coordination with other SC members in country.	(IPPs)
II. Help Protect the Health of SC Staff & their Families		
5. Staff orientation & Q&A sessions	Incl.: High risk groups, transmission, prevention, symptoms, home care, care seeking, & preparedness at home (based on WHO, CDC, ECDC, & documents for all staff on SC flu sites)	(IPPs)
6. Written guidance for staff & their families	As above, & promotion of healthy practices in the office, incl. ill staff staying home, hand washing, & respiratory etiquette.	(IPPs)

⁴ Updated summary, based on the matrix in: Avian & Pandemic Influenza Planning Assumptions, & Westport / Washington Summary Preparedness Matrix Influenza Working Group, Save the Children (US) December 12, 2007 Working Draft (at www.savethechildren.org/publications/technical-resources/avian-flu/ & <https://savenet2.savechildren.org/op/ip/gss/Pages/AvianFluUpdates.aspx>) Please see this document for further details.

7. Plans for further guidance & action in a severe wave	Including actions to help protect high risk staff, active screening of staff arriving at work, reducing office crowding/ meetings, office layout to reduce exposure, risk of using public transport for commuting to/from work, working from home, office closure, travel & relocation guidance, etc.	(IPPs, SMT, Global Safety & Security, IT, Facilities & Services)
8. Travel guidance	See guidance on SC flu sites	(Global Safety & Security, IPPs)
9. Staff relocation / stay in place	See guidance on SC flu sites	(SMT)
10. Arrangements with local health care providers	Services for staff/ families, including seasonal & pandemic flu immunization (if/ when available)	(HR, IPPs)
11. Flu-related supplies for SC offices / staff	PPE for SC staff who are health care providers & supplies for offices, incl. supplies for hand washing. (See guidance on SC flu sites)	(Facilities & Services, IPPs)
12. Staff at higher risk of severe illness (those pregnant or with underlying health conditions)	Consider specific guidance to encourage pandemic & seasonal flu immunization, prompt care seeking for illness with flu-like symptoms, & (particularly in a severe wave) other measures to reduce risk of infection.	(IPPs)
13. Staff with special needs	Incl. guidance for those who speak other languages.	(IPPs)
III. Help Protect the Health of Children & Families Where We Work		
14. Health-related programming with partners, incl. reducing transmission at family level & home care.	See CORE & H2P websites: www.coregroup.org/our-technical-work/initiatives/h2p & www.pandemicpreparedness.org/ (in particular, country planning guidance: www.coregroup.org/storage/documents/h2p/h2p_country_plan_rev_may14_6032.doc)	(IPPs)
15. Work with local partners to address needs of children.	www.flu.gov/professional/school/index.html , https://savenet2.savechildren.org/op/ip/gss/Documents/Flu_Kids.pdf	(IPPs, Education Sector)
IV. Continue Key Agency Functions		
16. Departmental / office Business Continuity Plans updated	Incl. plans for increased staff absence (due to illness, care of ill family members, & children home from school/ child care), staff working from home, & office closure in a severe wave.	(SMT, CODs)
17. IT guidance on working from home	See guidance on SC flu sites from IT	(IT)
18. Guidance & benefits related to absenteeism	See guidance on SC flu sites from Human Resources	(HR)

