

Important Information for the Rutgers-Newark Community

What you should know about the "Pandemic Flu"

Prepared Sept. 2007

1. What is Pandemic Flu?

A pandemic refers to a disease outbreak of which avian flu is one type - it is very contagious because the population has no immunity to it. Public health officials in the U.S. and abroad are currently observing the infection pattern of a specific virus, known as avian flu, H5N1 type. At this time, the virus has infected hundreds of millions of birds, including migrating birds and chickens, turkeys and ducks. It has occasionally caused human infection in people who have been in direct contact with infected birds.

However, the virus mutates rapidly, and is expected to develop more effective human-to-human transmission in the near future. Thus far this avian flu virus has infected 319 humans, causing 195 deaths (60% mortality) (as of July 2007.) These infections have occurred mainly in Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Thailand, China and Turkey. However, if the virus develops effective transmission among humans, conservative estimates project it could cause 500 million deaths globally. No one can predict with certainty whether or if a pandemic flu will occur, or how much harm it will cause.

2. How would you suspect avian flu?

Avian flu presents similarly to regular flu, with fever, chills, muscle aches, weakness and fatigue. Some patients also may have nausea, vomiting and neurological symptoms; important additional features are the sudden severe onset of chest symptoms, especially chest pain and shortness of breath. Bleeding from orifices may also occur. If someone has traveled to an area of the world with reported pandemic flu, within the prior 10 days, this would add to suspicion they might have contracted the infection.

3. What is Rutgers-Newark's plan to minimize harm in the event of an outbreak of avian flu?

Currently, groups of administrators representative of all departments at Rutgers-Newark have been convening to discuss and prepare an effective response to this potential threat. As of September 2007, we are in the stage of "pre pandemic planning" - that is, little or no human-to-human transmission has occurred. Our most effective step at this time is to involve everyone in education and training about how to prevent transmission of infection and protect oneself.

4. What are the basic guidelines for preventing the spread of respiratory infections, including avian flu?

- a. COVER YOUR COUGH OR SNEEZE** using tissues or your sleeve, if a tissue is not available. Do not spit. Discard soiled tissues.

b. WASH HANDS FREQUENTLY – after coughing, sneezing, before eating, after going to the bathroom, or handling possibly infected material. Posters and soap dispensers have been distributed widely at Rutgers-Newark. They should be in every public bathroom, in residence halls, in the entrances of eating facilities on campus, and in the health center. Read them carefully and follow their guidelines.

Suggested Further tips: Good Health Habits for Preventing the Flu
www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm

c. PERSONAL PROTECTION IN THE EVENT OF A PANDEMIC FLU WOULD INCLUDE face masks, gloves, gowns and social distancing – staying home if ill and coughing, and keeping at least six feet from others. These tactics will reduce transmission to healthy people.

d. HAVE A PERSONAL EMERGENCY KIT PREPARED in case of flu pandemic. The emergency kit should contain basic medical supplies, masks, and a stockpile of water and non-perishable food to last until additional resources can be obtained (one to two weeks.) Personal planning should also include consideration of an alternative shelter in case the Rutgers-Newark campus is closed and students are advised to leave campus. This decision would depend on the severity of the risk, and would be dictated by the NJ Governor and NJ State Department of Health officials.

5. What are Mass Clinics or PODS (point of distribution centers)? These clinics are planned for distribution of medications and vaccines for the entire Rutgers-Newark community and their families, when they become available. This effort will depend on Rutgers University Health Services, College of Nursing professionals, a medical volunteer corps, students and staff, working in collaboration with public health officials. It is estimated that approximately 1,000 people can be served per hour in an effective POD.

6. How would SOCIAL DISTANCING be implemented?

Classes and other social activities at Rutgers-Newark could be cancelled in the event of a pandemic flu, and residence halls could be closed for all who have an alternative home. A step such as this would be dictated by the NJ State Dept. of Health, under orders of the Governor and Commissioner of Health. Continuity of the educational process, in the event of a cancellation of classes, would entail “distance learning” primarily via computer programs such as Blackboard, and e-mail, so that students could continue study at home. For this to be effective students will need computer access at home, a Rutgers University net ID <https://netid.rutgers.edu/> and a password.

7. What is the COMMUNICATION PLAN for Rutgers-Newark?

In the event of a flu pandemic or other emergency, swift and comprehensive communication is essential to provide information and instructions to the entire community. The university will engage every mode of communication at its disposal in order to reach every member of the Rutgers-Newark community, including:

- Rutgers-Newark Home Page Announcements: **www.newark.rutgers.edu**
- RU Broadcast email (you must have an RU email account to receive this)
- RU Cellphone Text Messaging System <http://eis.rutgers.edu/intranet/ENS-Direct.html>
- Campus Signage
- Radio and Television Stations <http://www.newark.rutgers.edu/campusstatus/index.php>
- Blast Fax
- Blackboard site for class instruction <https://blackboard.newark.rutgers.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

8. What HEALTH CARE services are provided at Rutgers-Newark?

In the event of a pandemic flu, Rutgers-Newark's Health Services personnel will be available to triage, consult and treat students and staff as usual. The Health Center at Blumenthal Hall <http://health.newark.rutgers.edu/> has developed two isolation rooms, as a holding area for very ill patients.

9. Who is in charge of SAFETY AND SECURITY at Rutgers-Newark?

Rutgers University police and security personnel (*add link*) are in charge of maintaining these important functions at Rutgers-Newark.

10. What are the basic ADMINISTRATIVE GOALS for Rutgers-Newark in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak?

In the event of a pandemic flu, Rutgers-Newark's goal is for all departments to remain functioning with available staff, for students to continue their learning experience and for all to be as safe as possible.

PLEASE KEEP YOUR INFORMATION CURRENT BY CHECKING ON THIS WEBSITE FOR UPDATES.

MORE INFORMATION ON PANDEMIC FLU

For more information, please refer to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) websites, including guidelines on personal emergency kit preparation.

www.cdc.gov

www.pandemicflu.gov

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/

<http://www.ready.gov/>

In addition, comprehensive information on **Influenza: What Nurses Should Know**, has been prepared by the Rutgers College of Nursing and is available at <http://nursing.rutgers.edu/bioterrorism>