What is Pandemic Flu and Why Should Child Care Professionals Worry About It?

It sounds scary. And it is scary. Child care professionals need to be ready for a pandemic flu outbreak – just in case.

A pandemic outbreak occurs when a new flu virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population. It then begins to cause serious illness and spreads easily person-to-person worldwide.

Flu pandemics in 1918, 1957 and 1968 caused almost 800,000 U.S. deaths and more than 50 million deaths worldwide.

World health authorities fear another pandemic flu outbreak could happen sooner, rather than later. Their concerns focus on an avian form of the flu virus now affecting poultry flocks in Asia and other countries.

“Never before have so many countries been simultaneously affected, resulting in the loss of so many birds,” say scientists.

Even more alarming, humans have already been infected by sick poultry. More than half those infected have died and most cases have occurred in previously healthy children and young adults.

Given enough opportunities, the virus may change into a form that is highly infectious for humans and spread easily from person to person marking the start of a global outbreak or pandemic.

Most people will have little or no immunity to pandemic flu. Infection and illness rates will soar. A substantial percentage of the world’s population will require some form of medical care.

Yes, it’s scary. But there are some common-sense precautions, which we outline in this issue of Update, that can reduce the risk of pandemic flu in your child care business. We also strongly urge you to attend the pandemic flu training (see page 7) offered by the Fairfax County Health Department at the Government Center on August 21.
Symptoms of Flu
Symptoms of flu include:
- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- dry cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea are more common in children than adults

Complications of Flu
Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia and dehydration. Children may get sinus problems and ear infections.

How Flu Spreads
Flu viruses spread in respiratory droplets caused by coughing and sneezing. They usually spread from person to person. Sometimes people become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. You may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 days after becoming sick. That means that you can pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

Preventing Seasonal Flu
The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each fall.
- The “flu shot” - an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle - is approved for use in people older than 6 months.
- The nasal-spray flu vaccine - a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu - is approved for use in healthy people 5 years to 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

Flu Facts
Seasonal (or common) flu is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity, and a vaccine is available.

Avian (or bird) flu is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds. One strain of the avian flu is deadly to domestic fowl and can be transmitted from birds to humans. There is no natural immunity and no vaccine is available.

Pandemic flu is virulent human flu that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person. Currently, there is no pandemic flu.

Stay Healthy
Take common-sense steps to limit the spread of germs. Make good hygiene a habit.
- Wash children’s hands frequently with soap and water.
- Teach children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze.
- Make tissues available to children.
- Put used tissues in a waste basket.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don’t have a tissue.
- Clean children’s hands after coughing or sneezing. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, toys, and commonly shared items with chlorine bleach at least daily and when visibly soiled.
- Observe all children for symptoms of respiratory illness, especially when there is increased influenza in the community.
- Ask parents to keep children at home if they are sick.
Looking for More Resources About Staying Healthy?

You can download “Healthy Habits”, “Be a Germ Stopper” and “Cover Your Cough” posters from the Center of Disease Control (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm. The CDC also has a fact sheet, “Stopping Germs At Home, Work and School” available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Tagalog.

Kids can learn about health and hygiene at www.scrubclub.org.

The Fairfax County Health Department has a “Wash Your Hands” poster in English and Spanish. You can download an “It’s Flu Season” poster at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu/default.htm.

Health Department Offers Flu Shots

Flu shots are available at the Health Department’s district offices. The Fairfax County Health Department is encouraging all residents to protect themselves against seasonal or common influenza (flu), by getting a flu shot. Because it can take up to two weeks for a flu shot to provide protection, it is recommended to get a vaccine early in the flu season, which typically runs from October until April. Flu vaccines are available by appointment at the Health Department’s five district offices in Fairfax County, and cost about $25. County residents can make an appointment at their nearest district office below:

- Falls Church: 703-534-8343
- Herndon-Reston: 703-481-4242
- Fairfax City: 703-246-7100
- Mount Vernon: 703-704-6100
- Springfield: 703-569-1031

For more information about flu or the flu vaccine visit the Health Department’s website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu/default.htm. To speak to a public health nurse, call the Health Department at 703-246-2433, TTY 703-591-6435.

Emergency Preparedness: Be Ready!

A child care provider must be prepared for emergencies. There is no better time than now to develop or reexamine your emergency plan. A family child care provider has many daily responsibilities. Maintaining the safety of the children is more important than anything else. An emergency plan will help you think clearly and act quickly to protect yourself and the children in your care. Careful and consistent practice and good planning means that you and the children can respond to the situation being better prepared and less stressed.

Gather Supplies and Materials

An Emergency Kit
You want all your emergency information and supplies located in one place and ready to pick up and go. A backpack or duffel bag is easy to carry. Store your emergency kit in a place that children cannot reach. Consider the following items for your mobile emergency kit:

- Medical and Emergency Contact Information for each child
- An original copy of an Authorization for Emergency Treatment form for each child
- First Aid Kit
- Latex gloves
- Waterless hand sanitizer
- Battery operated lantern and/or flashlights
- Radio with weather and TV channel reception
- Extra batteries
- Blanket or tarp
- Medication prescribed for you or the children
Shelter in Place Area:
A shelter in place area is an area located away from windows and outside doors. An area like this is important in case of a tornado watch or warning. Most experts recommend having enough food and water for 3-5 days. In an emergency, take your emergency kit with you to the shelter in place area. Consider storing the following items in your shelter in place area:
- Small toys, games and books
- Diapers and diaper wipes
- Baby bottles and infant formula if applicable
- Whistle
- Large gallon zip lock bags and trash bags
- Cell phone
- Duct tape and plastic sheeting
- Hand soap and disinfecting wipes with bleach
- Safety/waterproof matches
- Scissors
- A change of clothing and shoes for you and for each child
- One blanket per person
- Plastic cups, utensils, plates and paper towels
- Manual can opener
- Non-perishable healthy foods
- One gallon of water per person per day

Practice Your Plan
Plan and practice your emergency preparedness plan. Make sure your CPR and First Aid certifications are current. These are critical skills in an emergency situation. Practice emergency/fire drills with the children monthly so they get used to the idea of lining up and leaving one area to go to a safer area. When children are familiar with the emergency/fire drill, they will be better able to respond if a real emergency occurs. Talk to the parents about your emergency preparedness plan. Identify an alternate place where you would take the children if you should have to evacuate your home, like your neighborhood fire department or community center. Include the phone number of this alternate location in your plan. Share your plan with parents.

Always demonstrate calmness and patience during the drills. Children are looking to you to show them how to react and deal with the situation.
- Tip One-A common fear for young children is the dark. When storms cause sudden loss of power, it can be frightening to children. Practice your emergency drill by telling the children that you are going to turn out the lights and use your flashlight. It is a good idea to have flashlights in the main areas you use for child care so you have quick and easy access to them.
- Tip Two-Practice your drills by going to the shelter in place area in your home. Have the children go to the area and stay there with you for a short period of time so they are familiar with spending time there.
- Tip Three-Make the experience fun and stress free by playing a few games, reading a story or singing some songs with the children so they become accustomed to being in this area.

Maintain Your Readiness
- Replace the batteries in your weather radio and flashlights every year.
- Update the children’s medical and emergency contact information every six months so you have the most current information to reach parents in the event of an emergency.
- Check the expiration date on water and food items and replace as needed.
- Check the expiration dates of any medications you have stored for you and the children.
- Talk with parents about any changes to your emergency plan.

**Emergency Contact Information**

It is important to keep contact information available in both your home and your emergency kit. When parents update their child’s Medical and Emergency Contact Information forms, ask them to review the forms carefully. Information should include:

- Current phone numbers to reach parents at work and at home, including cell phone numbers.
- Current phone numbers and names of individuals at a parent’s work who can locate parents if they are not at their phones.
- Current phone numbers and names of friends, relatives and neighbors who are authorized to pick up a child in an emergency.
- Current phone numbers and names of physicians.

**New FAX Number for Providers**

The Office for Children has a new FAX* number for providers: 703-653-1302.

Please use this number for all your communications with OFC including:

- Permit forms
- CPR/First Aid cards
- Immunizations
- Training certificates
- Correspondence
- Change of address/telephone number

*Always include your name and zip code on faxes.

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**Fairfax County Office for Children**

**Community Education and Provider Services announces**

**USDA FOOD PROGRAM PRIZES**

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

You are, if your food records are received in our Office by the 5th day of every month.

**HOW MANY PEOPLE GET A PRIZE EACH MONTH?**

One person each month will get a prize. All Food Program participants who submit food program records on time will have their name entered in the drawing.

**WHAT IS THE MONTHLY PRIZE?**

A prize equal to approximately $25.00.

**DOES EVERYONE GET THE SAME PRIZE?**

In addition to the monthly prizes, there are 4 special quarterly prizes! Everyone who turns in food records on time for three months in a row will automatically be entered into a special quarterly drawing!

**Congratulation to Our 2006 Winners!**

Quarterly Winners: Naomi Gibson, Nisreen Akhtar

Monthly Winners: Elizabethy Antwi, Marianne Calogero, Annie Jefferson, Dora Prado, Daisy Ramirez, Zahra Raeisian
FAMILY CHILD CARE WORKSHOPS

Note: The following workshops are designed specifically for family child care providers.

USDA CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM O ORIENTATION
Course #: F-06-814-1
Wednesday, September 6th
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Gum Springs Glen, Training Room
7839 Richmond Highway, Alexandria 22306

Course #: F-06-814-2
Monday, October 16th
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Pennino Building, Room 1034
12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax 22035

Course #: F-06-814S-1
Wednesday, October 18th (en español)
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Pennino Building, Room 734
12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax 22035

Course #: F-06-814-3
Wednesday, November 15th
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Gum Springs Glen, Training Room
7839 Richmond Highway, Alexandria 22306

Course #: F-06-814-4
Tuesday, December 12th
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Pennino Building, Room 734
12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax 22035

GROWING YOUR CHILD CARE BUSINESS
Course #: F-06-805-1
Thursday, October 26th
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Pennino Building, Room 1034
12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax 22035

Course #: F-06-805-2
Thursday, November 16th
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Gum Springs Glen, Training Room
7839 Richmond Highway, Alexandria 22306

GROWING YOUR CHILD CARE BUSINESS – THE NEXT STEP
Course #: F-06-806-1
Saturday, September 16th
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Gum Springs Glen, Training Room
7839 Richmond Highway, Alexandria 22306

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
Course #: F-06-803-1
Thursday, September 28th
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Pennino Building, Room 1034
12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax 22035

CHILD ABUSE REGOGNITION AND RESPONSE
Course #: F-06-800-1
Wednesday, October 25th
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Pennino Building, Room 1034
12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax 22035

ALL DAY TRAINING EVENT FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS
Course #: F-06-816-1
Saturday, October 14th
8:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
South County Government Center, 2nd Floor
8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria 22309

Training in Spanish
In early February 2007, there will be an All Day Training in Spanish. Look for more information in the next Institute for Early Learning brochure.

Registration
To register only for Family Child Care Workshops listed on this page, call 703-324-8100 or register online at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc

We regret that we are not able to accommodate children at any of these trainings.

GMU Hosts Child Care Workshop
George Mason University Child Development Center presents a Family Childcare Providers Workshops on Saturday, September 23, 2006 from 9-11 a.m. at the George Johnson Center, at GMU. The cost is $20. Participants will receive 2 hours of training credit. Contact Anchalee Burbach, Workshop Coordinator, at 703-993-4786 or email aburbach@gmu.edu for more information. The beginning date for registration is August 14.
PANDEMIC INFLUENZA
Preparing Your Business: Strategies to Lessen the Impact on Your Staff and Children

(Course #S-06-821)

Pandemic Influenza Update .........................Gloria Addo-Ayensu, MD, MPH
County Preparedness .........................Raja’a Satouri, MD
Overview of Child Care and
Preschool Pandemic Influenza Checklist ...Michelle Milgrim, RN, MSN

Date: Monday, August 21, 2006
Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Location: Fairfax County Government Center Board Room
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035

For more information on this event, call 703-324-8100.

Participants will receive 2 hours of training credit from the Office for Children. Certificates will be distributed at the conclusion of the program. We regret that we are unable to accommodate children at this event.

For reasonable ADA accommodation, call 703-324-8100, TTY 711.

Registration Request (Course #S-06-821)

Online: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/childcare/training.htm (personal registration ID number and PIN number required)

Automated telephone: 703-324-4018 (personal registration ID number and PIN number required)

Fax: 703-324-3925

Mail or in person: Fairfax County Office for Children, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 800, Fairfax, VA 22035

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Please Check:
- Family Child Care Provider
- Child Care Center/Preschool Staff*

*Name of Center/School:
________________________________________________________

You must be in a legally operating child care center, preschool or family child care home to enroll in any OFC training.
Inside: Pandemic Flu Overview and Emergency Preparedness Update

Register for Training Now!