



AusSurvivalist Avian Flu Report – October 2005

Incorporating our own threat assessment and advice for members

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In 1999, AusSurvivalist predicted little impact, if any, from the Y2K Bug. Among survivalists, we were one of the few that did.

The current potential for a flu pandemic hitting Australian shores is considered more of a problem for three reasons. First, there has not been 20 years notice and \$100 billion spent solely on fixing the problem. Second, the Y2K Bug did not pose an actual threat to our health. Third, there was a known cure for the Y2K bug, no vaccine for the Avian Flu can be produced until the actual pandemic strain is identified and some of the treatment drugs such as Tamiflu may not be as effective as thought.

The next six months are a critical time in relation to the Avian Flu. October through to the end of December because this is the time any migratory birds from the Northern Hemisphere arrive in Australia. January through March is a high-risk period because this is the Northern Hemisphere winter.

The risk of a pandemic actually happening in Australia in the next six months is put at 5 percent. This means there is a 95 percent probability it will not happen. The problem is if it does, you will need to be prepared and as we have already seen with the stocks of anti-viral drugs if you do not get them now you probably will not be able to when you really need them. The other unknown is the effect on Australia of a pandemic in the Northern Hemisphere, how will it effect us economically, will it increase the probability of the pandemic spreading to Australia even if enforced quarantine is in effect?

If you are expecting the government to look after you, you should know that whilst the Australian Government plan is an excellent response to the threat it does have a number of fundamental flaws such as:

- It assumes that the only 25% of the population will fall ill and of these only about 14,000 people will die . . . this is a mortality rate of only 0.3% . . . **H5N1 (Avian Flu) has a mortality approaching 60%.**
- It assumes that a vaccine can be developed in three months with intensive effort, however, the easiest way to make large amount of a vaccine is to use live chicken eggs and **H5N1 purportedly kills the embryo before the vaccine can be made.**
- It assumes **Tamiflu** will be effective against H5N1, however, some test have shown that it **may not be effective at all** even at double the recommended dose for twice the recommended time.
- It assumes that people will not break out of quarantine areas . . . given the lack on manpower, a lack of treatment facilities even with the stockpile **people will break quarantine and the disease will spread.**

We hope that you will read this report hopefully make a more informed choice as to the level of preparations you make for yourself and your family.

Australian Management Plan For Pandemic Influenza

We recently downloaded and read a copy of the "Australian Management Plan For Pandemic Influenza" dated June 2005 and produced by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. If you have not done so, we urge you to download it as well and read it for yourself.

The document can be downloaded from

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-pandemic-plan.htm>

The two major strategies chosen by Australia to respond to the threat are **containment and the maintenance of essential services**. The aim is to minimise the deaths during the estimated 3 - 6 months it will take to **fast track the development of a specific vaccine**. Anti-viral's such as Tamiflu are reserved for emergency workers so they can continue to work while the vaccine is being developed.

Containment: this refers to preventing transmission and spread by border control measures, isolation of the sick, quarantine of contacts and judicious use of anti-viral medication.

Maintenance of essential services: if there is an explosive spread within the general population, containment may not be possible. The strategy will shift to an emphasis on the maintenance of essential services.

Some of the interesting points to emerge were that the government has allocated \$156.8 million for preparations. Funding has been used to:

- a. establish a National Medicines Stockpile of antiviral drugs and protective equipment;
- b. establish an independent WHO Collaborating Centre on Influenza reference and Research (located in Melbourne);
- c. contracting the two largest vaccine manufacturers in the world to guarantee sufficient supplies on pandemic vaccine for all Australians.

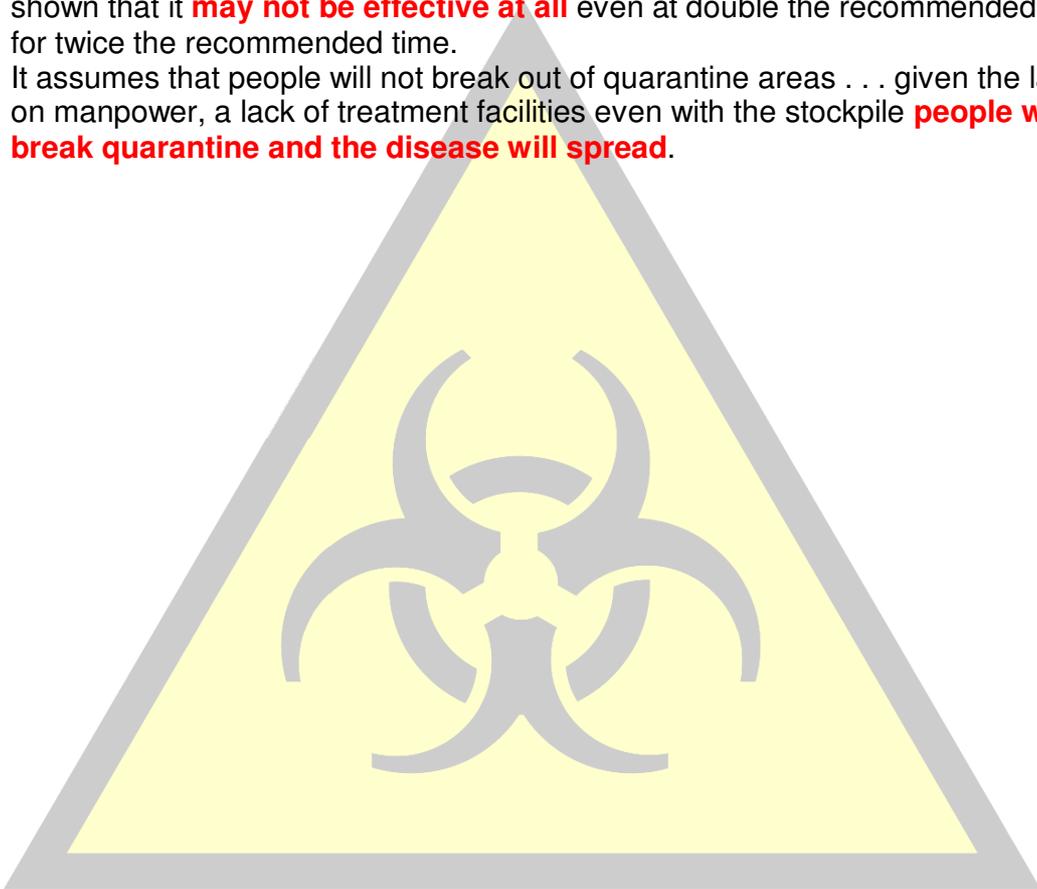
We think it is important to mention further the arrangements the Australian government has made with regard to the production of a vaccine. In late 2004 the government signed agreements with two pharmaceutical companies, CSL Ltd and Sanofi Pasteur Pty Limited, to supply the normal seasonal influenza vaccine for the next three influenza seasons (2005--08) as well as pandemic vaccine production capacity. **These companies have the capability to produce pandemic vaccine and will close down normal operations to do this for Australia.**

There was no mention of the military or its use to maintain order or enforce quarantine anywhere in the document, however, it is strongly believed they will be deployed to support civilian medical and border protection authorities and maintain public order.

Flaws in the strategy

The government strategy is flawed in the following ways:

- It assumes that the only 25% of the population will fall ill and of these only about 14,000 people will die . . . this is a mortality rate of only 0.3% **H5N1 (Avian Flu) has a mortality approaching 60%.**
- It assumes that a vaccine can be developed in three months with intensive effort, however, the easiest way to make large amount of a vaccine is to use live chicken eggs and **H5N1 purportedly kills the embryo before the vaccine can be made.**
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General Comments

Current events

Recently we have seen strategic relocation of the National Medicine Stockpile (NMS). This has caused some anxiousness - justifiably - among those who come across it (including myself). It is disconcerting to see several millions of dollars of equipment being unloaded all marked "National Medicine Stockpile".

Given that deployment of the NMS can only be done if "Information a threat to human health or imminent terrorist attack" and approval has been given by the Commonwealth Medical Officer (CMO) it is reasonable to assume that the threat is greater than is being communicated in the media.

Time Frame

The most critical period for the Avian Flu is the next six months. October through to the end of December because this is the time any migratory birds from the Northern Hemisphere arrive in Australia. January through March because this is the Northern Hemisphere winter.

Incubation period

The incubation period for human influenza viruses is two to three days, with a range of one to seven days.

The infectious period is usually from the onset of symptoms to:

- 7 days since the resolution of fever (in those > 12 years); and
- 21 days since the onset of illness (in those ≤ 12 years).

A small proportion of patients may be infectious just before symptoms appear.

Symptoms

Symptoms of bird flu in humans have ranged from typical flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, severe respiratory diseases (such as acute respiratory distress), and other severe and life-threatening complications. The symptoms of bird flu may depend on which virus caused the infection.

AusSurvivalist threat levels

Level	Probability (next 6 months)	Description	AusSurvivalist Recommended Action
Aus 1	80%	Animal infection in Australia: the risk of human infection or disease is considered low.	Review current preparations against suggestions later in this document. Move toward achieving minimum levels suggested.
Aus 2	70%	Animal infection in Australia: substantial risk of human disease.	As above
Aus 3	45%	Human infection in Australia with new subtype(s) but no human to human spread or at most rare instances of spread due to close contact	As above plus limit exposure to crowds or contact in general with other people.
Aus 4	25%	Human infection in Australia: small cluster(s) consistent with limited human-to-human transmission, spread highly localised, suggesting the virus is not well adapted to humans.	As above plus consider keeping children home and working from home. If you need to bug-out this is probably the best time to do so.
Aus 5	10%	Human infection in Australia: Larger cluster(s) but human-to-human transmission still localised suggesting the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully adapted (substantial pandemic risk).	Ensure preparations are fully in place and isolate yourself and family if possible. If you still can bug-out away from major population centres do so now.
Aus 6	5%	Pandemic in Australia	Isolate yourself until the virus runs its course . . . probably 3 months maximum.

Avian Flu Scenario

What sort of things can we expect to see if there is a pandemic in Australia?

Financial Markets

Please remember that the flu in 1918 was over in months and was followed by an economic boom time the 'roaring twenties'.

The most likely scenario is a significant decline in spending resulting in deflation.

- Expect the share market to drop around 30 percent before it is closed.
- Expect the prices of steel and other base metals to fall.
- Expect the price of oil to fall.
- Expect the price of silver and gold only to increase in the short term and to fall dramatically once the crisis is over.
- Expect banks to close as staff absenteeism rises.
- Expect technology stocks to fall.
- Expect house prices and rents to fall.
- Expect heavily mortgaged homebuyers to default on their loans.
- Expect insurance companies to fail.
- Expect an increase in business bankruptcies.

Health

- People aged 20 to 40 are most at risk from the flu.
- Hospitals will be unable to cope if the mortality rate is higher than 2% and more than 25% of the population infected.
- Major cities will have a higher death rate.
- However, lethality will decline as infection increases.

The key period will be the next six months. The next three months till the end of December when the migratory birds arrive from the northern hemisphere and January through March that corresponds to northern hemisphere winter.

It should also be noted that a key ingredient for Tamiflu comes from China.

Politics

Interesting things could happen politically should a pandemic occur. We suspect both China and North Korea may see this as an opportune time to move against Taiwan and South Korea. Other worldwide flashpoints may also emerge as the US and its allies deal with domestic problems.

Movement

One of the most obvious effects of the pandemic will be restrictions on movement; however, this will only succeed for a limited period before panic compels people to break quarantine.

- You will see ships, boats and planes denied landing rights.
- You will see quarantine areas set up and movement in and out of these areas prohibited.
- Concerts and sporting events will be cancelled.
- Absenteeism will be high and unemployment will increase.
- Restaurants, hotels and bars will be closed.
- Tourism in general will be down.
- Schools will be the first to close when the pandemic hits our shores.

Supplies

- We will see a buying shift to internet based businesses providing the postal service still operates.
- There will be shortages of some supplies as distribution channels are affected.
- There will be a 10 to 50% decrease in retail sales generally.
- Masks and other protective materials will be in short supply and price gouging will occur.
- Meat, especially chicken, will be off the menu and most people will have a vegetarian diet.

Personal strategies for the avian flu.

These represent our minimum recommendations; obviously, some people will do a lot more.

Employment

- If you work in hospitality . . . change jobs!
- If you have children arrange for childcare should schools close.

Finances

- Get cashed up . . not just cash in the bank but also some at home should banks close.
- Get personal documents together e.g. loan, bank accounts, mortgage etc

Travel

- Try not to plan any long distance travel for the next six months.

Medical Supplies

- Get a script for Relenza (instead of Tamiflu) . . . we are recommending this for a couple of reasons; First it currently will assist if you catch the flu and can be used as a prophylaxis. Even if you do not use it for the avian flu it is a good addition to your survival medical kit as diseases such as the flu are a potential problem whatever the event.
- Purchase 3 months of multi-vitamins for everyone in the family.
- Purchase 3 months of anti-oxidants such as silica hydride, pynogenal or microhydrin for every member of the family.
- Purchase a good supply of p2 masks and perhaps disposable goggles (or at least safety glasses you ca disinfect) . . . again these are of use even if the avian flu does not hit and are a valuable addition to your survival gear.
- Get 3 months worth of any prescription drugs you are taking.
- Review your first aid kit.
- If anyone has asthma or similar, respiratory problems consider getting an O2 bottle/regulator or a nebulizer with a stock of Ventolin ampoules.
- Purchase disinfectant soap/anti-bacterial handwash (and/or wipes) and encourage regular washing.
- Purchase bleach or hospital grade disinfectant to clean floors and other surfaces.

Food and Water

- Make sure you have food stores to last three months . . . remember only store what you eat!
- Purchase seeds and start a vegetable patch.
- Purchase a water tank or lay in addition supplies of fresh water and a means of purification. To be honest you really need around 4 litres per person per day minimum (For a family of four that is 16 x 90 or 1,440 litres). A bath holds between 100 and 200 litres of water – just in case you were wondering.
- Purchase two or three jerry cans of petrol/diesel for the car.
- Make sure you can still cook and provide light should the power go off.

Defences

- Ensure you have some expedient means of defending your property.
- Ammonia filled water pistols can be quite effective.
- So can broken glass on paths.
- 3M safety film on glass can also be considered.

Family disaster plan

- Update your family disaster plan.

Other

- Enjoy a sauna . . . the jury is out on this one but one 1989 German study found that people who steamed twice a week got half as many colds as those who didn't. One theory: When you take a sauna you inhale air hotter than 80 degrees, a temperature too hot for cold and flu viruses to survive.
- Finally, learn to **relax** . . . If you can teach yourself to relax, you can activate your immune system on demand. There is evidence that when you put your relaxation skills into action, your interleukins -- leaders in the immune system response against cold and flu viruses -- increase in the bloodstream. Train yourself to picture an image you find pleasant or calming. Do this 30 minutes a day for several months. Keep in mind, relaxation is a learnable skill, but it is *not* doing nothing. People who try to relax, but are in fact bored, show no changes in blood chemicals.