

## Pandemics, Plagues and Biological Attacks

A pandemic flu is always a possible disaster, and with the way the world is connected now with air travel, it will happen again, the question is when? In 1918, a flu pandemic spread from troops returning home from World War One. It rapidly killed 50,000 people in the USA, and 500,000 people worldwide. The problem with a "bird flu" is that by the time it mutates and begins to transfer from person to person (which has not happened yet with the H5N1 Virus), it will spread very quickly. It will take 4 – 5 months for the vaccine to be created and produced in enough quantity in order to vaccinate everyone. Experts predict that 25% to 50% of the population would become infected, as compared to 5% - 20% with the seasonal flu. Pandemic flu's also attack all age groups, not just the "at risk" groups such as the very young, very old, and those with medical conditions.

The best protection is to learn good hygiene habits now and teach them to children. Wash your hands! Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol whenever you have been in a public place – doorknobs and shopping carts are major germ havens! Viruses can live up to eight hours on surfaces! Don't touch your mouth, nose or eyes, these are a direct highway for viruses to enter your body. If you are ill and need to go out in public, wear a surgical mask. If you cough or sneeze, don't use your hands, cough into your shirt sleeve instead. Stay a minimum of 3 feet away from other people if you or they are sick. If a Pandemic Flu or a Biological Attack should occur, as with all disasters, follow the advice of authorities.

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