



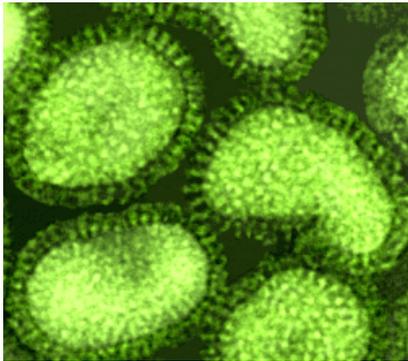
Public Health Update

Friday, June 16, 2006

Avian Influenza Update

H5N1, the strain of Avian Influenza that has been circulating in Asia, Europe and Africa, continues to affect wild and domestic birds, and occasionally, humans.

To date, no change in the genetic makeup of this virus has occurred that would enable efficient human to human transmission. However, the potential for adaptation to a human disease, which could cause a world-wide epidemic (called a pandemic), will continue to exist as long as this virus continues to be wide spread in birds.



Influenza Virus as seen under an electron microscope

NPS, along with other agencies, is currently conducting monitoring of birds in Alaska in order to detect this virus should it arrive from Asia in migratory birds. So far, the virus has not been detected.

The NPS plans for preparation and response to this issue (for both wildlife and the potential pandemic) are posted at: http://www.nps.gov/public_health/zed/ai/ai.htm

The national contact for wildlife issues is Margaret Wild, DVM (970) 225-3593 and the contact for human illness issues is CAPT David Bleicher (202) 513-7224.

NPS is planning to activate the national incident management team sometime in July for the purpose of carrying out certain tasks called for in the plans and conduct an exercise to test and make any necessary adjustments to the plans.

Cumulative Number of Confirmed Human Cases of Avian Influenza A/(H5N1) Reported to WHO*

15 June 2006

Country	Total (since 2003)	
	cases	deaths
Azerbaijan	8	5
Cambodia	6	6
China	18	12
Djibouti	1	0
Egypt	14	6
Indonesia	50	38
Iraq	2	2
Thailand	22	14
Turkey	12	4
Viet Nam	93	42
Total	226	129

Total number of cases includes number of deaths.

WHO reports only laboratory- confirmed cases.

*WHO is the World Health Organization

NPS Establishes Epidemiologist Position Within Office of Public Health

Please welcome LCDR David Wong, MD to the WASO Office of Public Health.

LCDR Wong is a medical epidemiologist and pediatrician who has been with NPS since May 15, 2006. LCDR Wong is the first- ever lead epidemiologist for the agency, and his responsibilities include such activities as leading or assisting in outbreak investigations, analyzing disease trends and patterns, assisting in avian influenza preparedness issues, creating park- based surveillance systems, and serving as a subject matter expert within NPS. We encourage you to contact LCDR

Wong if you have any medical or public health questions and concerns.

Prior to coming to NPS, LCDR Wong was a medical epidemiologist with both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Indian Health Service. LCDR Wong received his MD from Duke University and completed his pediatrics residency at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He began his public health career in 2002 as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer with the CDC Division of STD Prevention.

LCDR Wong is located in Washington DC in the Office of Public Health and can be reached by e- mail or at (202) 513- 7160.

How Can You Prepare for a Natural Disaster?

Source: FEMA document titled *Basic Preparedness*. The original can be located at: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/basic_preparedness.pdf

Preparing for a natural disaster, before it actually occurs, is very important. You can do several things in preparing for a natural disaster, for yourself, as well as for your family.

1. First of all, you need to be aware of the disasters that you may encounter in your community, the community plans in case of a disaster, and the risks you might face from such an event.

2. Having a readily available National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio receiver to keep track of weather updates is a good idea. NOAA maintains a nationwide network of radio stations that broadcasts weather information from a nearby National Weather Service office to NOAA weather radio receivers.

3. An emergency supply kit should also be on hand. It's a good idea to have a kit at home, work, and in your car. Basic items to put in the emergency kits:

- Three- day supply of non- perishable food to eat

- Three-day supply of water. Allow one gallon of water per person, per day
- Small, portable, battery-powered radio or television and an extra set of batteries
- A whistle
- Extra clothing to change into
- A flashlight and extra batteries
- Sanitation and hygiene items like toilet paper and wet ones
- A waterproof container and matches
- Kitchen utensils like a can opener and plates and utensils
- Photocopies of your credit and identification cards
- Cash and coins
- A first aid kit and the manual for it
- Your special need items like medicines, contacts, etc.
- Items for babies, if you have an infant
- Other items to meet you or your family's needs
- If living in a cold climate, you might also need clothing and blankets to protect you from the cold, if the heat goes out

4. You also need to know the quickest escape route in your house and work, as well as where you would seek shelter in the case of each specific disaster.

5. Community warning systems and evacuation routes should also be determined.

Here is a list of some basic evacuation guidelines for any type of disaster:

Always

Keep a full tank of gas in your car, if it is likely that evacuation will occur
Prepare to ride with someone if you don't have a car
Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow the local evacuation instructions explained on the radio.
If instructed to evacuate, evacuate ASAP
Leave quickly so you won't be trapped by bad weather
Follow the recommended evacuation routes, not deviating from these
Be on alert for road hazards and don't drive in flooded areas
Stay away from power lines that have fallen down

If You Have Time

Bring your disaster supply kit
Wear protective clothing like sturdy shoes, long pants, shirt, and a cap
Secure your home by locking and closing doors and windows and unplugging electrical equipment. Leave refrigerator and freezer plugged in, unless there is a risk of flooding
Let other people know where you are going

6. An emergency plan for disasters should be developed and practiced, and you should know what you would do for each specific disaster. Implementing a plan and practicing it is very important, and could potentially save your life.

7. You can find additional information and planning tools at:

http://www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/basic_preparedness.pdf



Food Safety For Picnics and Barbeques During the Summer Months

Source: Material from CDC and USDA

Why an article on food safety during the summer months? The answer is clear: "Food poisoning" is more prevalent during

the warmer months of the year. The summer temperatures and higher humidity's provide ideal conditions for bacterial growth. Under the right conditions, harmful bacteria will quickly multiply to high numbers on food, raising the potential for illness. Another reason that "food poisoning" occurs more during this season, is because more people are cooking outside, under non-controlled cooking conditions. Unlike cooking outside, kitchens provide controlled cooking conditions, stoves, ovens, refrigerators and controlled room temperatures all help to reduce the hazards associated with the preparation of food. Due to the upsurge in food poisoning during the summer months, taking the time to review a few simple food safety tips for your own activities or to help advise park visitors may help to prevent unnecessary risks.

Wash your hands often

When washing your hands, always wash with soapy, hot water, both before and after handling food.

Marinating during a barbeque

If marinating for long periods of time, remember to keep the remaining foods refrigerated. Also, when marinating, make sure that the sauce that was used to marinate the raw meat or poultry is not put on the cooked food, unless the marinate from the raw foods has been boiled.

Preheat before grilling

Prior to the actually grilling process, preheat the coals on the grill for 20 to 30 minutes. When the coals are lightly coated with ash, there should be sufficient heat for proper cooking.

Temperature Gauge for grilling

A meat thermometer should be used to check and make sure that the food reaches a proper internal cooking temperature.

Grilling beef, chicken, and/or fish

To ensure food is properly cooked, these temperature guidelines can be used:

1. Beef - Hamburgers should be cooked to 160° F, whereas intact cuts of beef like steaks and roasts should be cooked to 145 ° F for medium rare or to 160° F for medium.

2. Chicken- Poultry parts should be cooked to 170° F, whereas, ground poultry should be cooked to 165° F.
3. Fish- When cooking fish, the fish will be cooked thoroughly when it becomes opaque and flakes easily.

Avoid Cross Contamination

When putting raw meat in a cooler, make sure to properly wrap the meat so juices and blood from the meat won't come in contact with other foods. Put the wrapped meat in the bottom of the cooler, so if juices do spill out, they won't contaminate other food. When grilling, don't put the cooked food from the grill on the same plate that was once used for the raw food. Likewise, don't reuse contaminated forks, knives, and other utensils, when eating cooked food.



Chill food properly

Don't let bacteria multiply, so use a COOL icebox. To help prevent bacteria from multiplying, make sure to fill your cooler completely with ice, especially if you are housing perishable foods. A full cooler keeps cold longer than one that is only partially filled, therefore you should pack a lot of ice or freezer packs to keep the constant cold temperature. Refrigerators should be kept at 40 °F or below, and this should be monitored with a thermometer.

Leftovers

Food left out (not refrigerated) for more than two hours, should probably not be eaten.

To learn more about food safety, visit the "Fight BAC!" website at www.fightbac.org

Office of Public Health COSTEP's

Everyone in NPS is familiar with bringing on seasonal help. The office of Public Health has copied this technique and for

the next few months the U.S. Public Health Service has assigned to our program two interns, called COSTEP's (Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program). These students are given a temporary commission at the rank of Ensign.

Michelle Kenney is located in Seattle and is assisting our Regional Public Health Consultant there with all of the summer on-site park public health work. She will be helping to evaluate drinking water systems, waste water disposal, food safety and vector borne disease issues.

Michelle is an undergraduate student at Eastern Kentucky University, majoring in Environmental Health.

Michelle is planning on graduating in the spring of 2007 with a BS in Environmental Health.

Pamela Motloch is located in the Office of Public Health in WASO. She is assisting with the NPS Avian Influenza planning effort and helping to analyze national food safety data collected last year by all of our Regional Public Health Consultants. In addition to her WASO work, Pamela will be spending a week in the field getting to see the work that our Consultants conduct in the parks.

Pamela is a graduate student at the University of North Texas and is nearing completion of her Masters in Public Health.

Both of these students have jumped right in and have already made real contributions at their assignments.

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Program Websites:

Internal:

http://www.nps.gov/public_health/intra/index.htm

External:

http://www.nps.gov/public_health/



In Partnership for nearly 100 years, the National Park Service and the United States Public Health Service have worked together to protect the health of visitors in Americas Parks!