

Avian flu and pandemic flu summary and checklist

	Pandemic alert period – Overseas 3 = Now	Pandemic phases Australia 3 to Australia 5	Pandemic in Australia phase 6
General practice	<p>GP practices may be the first to see suspected H5N1 influenza in humans.</p> <p>Doctors need to know who to call for advice and how to investigate and refer.</p> <p>The safety of doctors, staff and other patients is paramount.</p> <p>There will be anxiety and fear of infection in contacts.</p>	<p>GPs are likely to see a surge of many potential cases, contacts and worried people.</p> <p>Referral pathways will change.</p> <p>Practices will need to try to separate suspected flu patients from non-flu patients.</p> <p>Home visit demands could increase.</p>	<p>Practices risk being overwhelmed with flu work and the challenges of sick patients with other chronic diseases. There will be staff absenteeism from sickness, fear or family care needs.</p> <p>Some practices may decide to collaborate with local colleagues to be able to maintain a viable service to ‘ride out’ the surge.</p> <p>GPs and their staff will be at higher risk of infection. GPs may decide on a flu roster to allow targeting of prophylaxis.</p>
Broader community	<p>The public health aim is to ‘keep it out’.</p> <p>Human H5N1 infection overseas will occur from sick birds with very rare instances of human-to-human spread.</p> <p>The first case in Australia will provoke much public and media interest.</p> <p>Watch out for health alerts from DHS.</p> <p>DHS will control and supply antiviral prophylaxis for cases and contacts.</p> <p>Support and advice on general practice planning is available from DHS.</p>	<p>There will be human infection in Australia with increasing spread between people.</p> <p>Public health responses will be to ‘stamp it out’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suspected cases sent to designated hospitals • stay at home to reduce spread if sick • intensive contact tracing • targeted antiviral prophylaxis for contacts and front-line health workers. <p>DHS would control and supply antivirals.</p> <p>Watch out for new health alerts with information for GPs.</p>	<p>Many people may be infected in up to three waves over a 12-month or more period with high levels of severe morbidity and death.</p> <p>Hospitals are likely to be swamped and will have flu streams/clinics.</p> <p>There may be high levels of absenteeism due to sickness and care needs with the threat of disruption of essential services, food, power, water, fuel and breakdown of public order.</p> <p>The best source of up to date information will be the Chief Health Officer. DHS will supply antivirals and implement vaccination strategy if/when available.</p> <p>Municipal disaster plans will come into action with community support and coordination.</p>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make one person responsible for coordinating flu planning in the practice <input type="checkbox"/> • report all suspected cases immediately – contact DHS on phone number 1300 651 160 <input type="checkbox"/> • train doctors and nurses on symptoms, signs, and epidemiology of H5N1 influenza <input type="checkbox"/> • prepare a triage plan ready for suspected case of H5N1 flu <input type="checkbox"/> • buy personal protective equipment and learn how to use <input type="checkbox"/> • start thinking about the possible impacts on practice functioning and how you might respond <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • train doctors and nurses to think ‘Could it be flu?’ <input type="checkbox"/> • use personal protective equipment with possible flu cases <input type="checkbox"/> • update triage plan for suspected cases for the front desk <input type="checkbox"/> • decide how you will handle home visit requests <input type="checkbox"/> • devise a strategy to identify contacts <input type="checkbox"/> • draw up practice business survival plan for these stages <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brief doctors, nurses and non-clinical staff on the pandemic phase <input type="checkbox"/> • talk about reducing risk and staying well <input type="checkbox"/> • implement practice business survival plan <input type="checkbox"/> • consider workload management of flu and non-flu patients <input type="checkbox"/> • know how to order additional supplies of personal protective equipment <input type="checkbox"/> <p>(Act now to plan for these phases)</p>