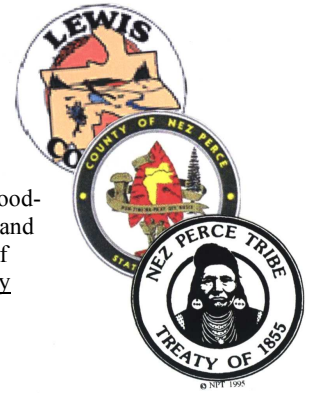
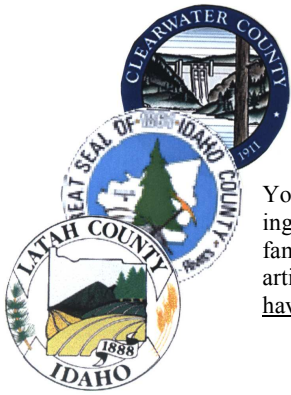


# Get Pandemic Ready



Your Office of Emergency Management plans and prepares for disasters, ranging from localized flooding to worldwide events. Preparation includes local government, the private sector and individuals and families. Pandemic flu is a rapidly emerging threat affecting all of us. The purpose of this series of articles is to inform citizens of what they can do to protect themselves. We recommend each family have three months of food, water, medications, and other supplies on-hand.

## Issue 1: Pandemic Flu Background

Influenza is a virus. It can be highly contagious. It can infect people and some animals. There are many different types of influenza. The normal influenza that spreads among people every year is called H3N2. There is another type of influenza virus called H5N1 (or bird flu). This virus spreads easily among birds and has killed large numbers of them. The H5N1 virus is not highly contagious among humans yet, but it has infected over 250 people worldwide, and killed more than half of them.

Some scientists and health officials are concerned that H5N1 will become as infectious as H3N2. If this happens, a pandemic will begin. In a pandemic, it is expected that 20-50% of the world's people will become infected. We don't know what the fatality rate would be, but so far, over 50% of the people infected with H5N1 have died. We hope that the fatality rate will decrease if/when a H5N1 pandemic begins, but the leading flu scientists have said that it doesn't have to. If a H5N1 pandemic occurs with its current fatality rate, 50 million people may die in the US alone. Worldwide, the death toll may be one billion people. Only nuclear war between the major powers has the potential to kill more people. Even if the death rate drops to 2%, which occurred in 1918 with another flu virus, 2 million Americans are expected to die.

No-one can predict with certainty when or if a particular subtype of flu will cause a pandemic, but many scientists believe the risk of an H5N1 pandemic is real and could occur at any time. This virus has been mutating at a very high rate and shows signs of adapting to humans. Although there are other flu viruses that could cause a pandemic, H5N1 is the most likely the candidate.

Some people assume that modern Science has a cure for a pandemic virus and the US government will be responsible for managing the response to a pandemic. Unfortunately, that is not true. Although there are vaccines for "regular" flu, it is unlikely that there will be a vaccine for the first "wave" of a pandemic. This is because it will take at least 6 months to produce a significant amount of vaccine. There are drugs called antivirals that may help people survive an H5N1 infection, but they must be given very quickly after symptoms start or they don't work. There are not enough of these drugs for more than a fraction of the population. There are already signs that H5N1 may be evolving resistance to these drugs.

The preceding is extracted from an excellent website, pandemic flu information (PFI), at <http://web.mac.com/monotreme1>. What do the figures mean for our region (number of deaths, assuming a 35% infection rate) ?

Jurisdiction	Population	2% fatality rate	50% fatality rate
Clearwater County	8,400	59	1470
Idaho County	15,600	109	2730
Latah County	35,000	245	6125
Lewis County	3,700	26	648
Nez Perce County	38,000	266	6650

**There is clear danger here. This is not a seasonal cold; it's a killer. If enough people take responsibility for their own survival, we can significantly reduce the infection rate. This will save hundreds to thousands of lives – right here.**

For more information, or to participate in local pandemic flu planning, contact your local Emergency Manager.

**Contact #'s**

**Clearwater County**  
Emergency Management  
476-4064

**Idaho County**  
Emergency Management  
983-3074

**Latah County**  
Disaster Services  
883-2265

**Lewis County**  
Emergency Management  
937-2380

**Nez Perce County**  
Emergency Management  
799-3084

**Nez Perce Tribe**  
ERWMM  
843-7375 ext. 2377