

# A Pandemic Survival Plan

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An Excerpt from Chapter 11 of [The Bird Flu Manual](#)

The advent of a severe influenza pandemic will be a survival challenge for everyone. No one will escape the threat irrespective of wealth, rank, or intelligence. Pandemic influenza will not discriminate based on race, creed, or national origin. We will all be thrust into the same caldron, from which the virus and our struggle with it will cast our fate. Pandemic Survival Plans

## Write down your plan

Your first priority should be writing a pandemic survival plan. A good plan is one that includes where your family will live during the pandemic, with whom you will partner, and how you will provide for your family's basic needs. Draft this plan as soon as you accept that risk from an influenza pandemic is real and high. When deciding about how much time, effort, and money to commit to pandemic preparedness, consider that your goal is to survive the duration of the pandemic. To insure this survival requires having an appreciation of how the pandemic could affect your family and way of life. With this appreciation comes a better idea of what needs to be prepared and how you can meet basic challenges such as adequate supplies of food, water, and electrical power. General Preparedness, Books, & Water

Surviving well during the pandemic doesn't require a permanent or even the best solution, only a solution that is "good enough." Purchase a composition notebook and keep it with you while you read this section of the manual. As you go along, write down thoughts and ideas in your notebook so that you remember them when you prepare your PSP. In this way, you'll have a head start on the plan.

## **Pandemic Survival Plan triggers**

Triggers are milestones in the evolution of the pandemic influenza virus that cause you to take certain predetermined actions. Triggers are an important way to help one objectively, logically, and comprehensively initiate certain steps in a PSP at an appropriate time. In times of great stress and risk, you want to be prepared rather than flying by the seat of your pants. Preparing for a severe influenza pandemic is time-consuming and expensive. And you want to avoid implementing your plan if it is unnecessary. The trigger schema presented here is an example of a template for your own tailored plan that will reflect the unique character and priorities suited to your situation.

As discussed earlier, the H5N1 bird flu has acquired all the genetic characteristics it needs to establish pandemic status except one. When and if it will take this last evolutionary step is unknown. However, the factors I've elucidated point to a high likelihood of this occurrence. As time passes, the risk increases that the pandemic will unfold. Careful planning is the hallmark of sound preparation, and a good plan will include a list of items to have on hand. It also will cover how to make the best use of time and available resources as well as establish a logical point at which these items should be obtained. The plan should pinpoint the appropriate time to take certain actions based on the state of the pandemic. If people wait too long to create or implement their plans, the items they need may no longer be available or cost too much. On the other hand, people also should refrain from jumping prematurely and buying supplies that they will not need.

Having a pre-determined PSP trigger for each important action specified in the plan provides discipline. If "X" happens, it is time to implement "Y". Following this approach will reduce the tendency for people to be uncertain of when to act. No discussion or decision will be needed when the triggers are clearly defined.

As the virus progresses along its evolutionary path, more and more people will begin to perceive the risk and start their preparations. If you wait too long to prepare, you could get caught without the essential supplies your family needs to survive the pandemic. Using triggers that are tied to the actual behavior of the virus to help guide the execution of your plan is a sensible solution to this problem.

In this manual, I refer often to the WHO Influenza Pandemic Phase system as a key barometer of bird flu activity. As described earlier, the WHO has been slow to advance their alert phase. Despite this shortcoming, this alert system remains the best model to follow for gauging the virus's developmental progress.

What is needed is a way to determine the *de facto* or actual WHO Phase we are in now rather than waiting for an official announcement, which may be slow in coming. The triggers we follow therefore must be governed by events on the ground, specifically the *behavior of the virus rather than the declarations of the WHO*. Part I of this manual gives you the tools and knowledge needed to help you determine the virus' progress. Armed with this information, you can make an independent assessment of the progress the virus is making on its pandemic path. A review of information presented in media reports will help you extrapolate meaning and impact. You will be able to interpret the facts yourself rather than relying only on optimistic interpretations and announcements from the news services and government agencies. I will monitor the events leading to the pandemic and maintain a "de facto" WHO Pandemic Alert Phase on the BFM website based on these principals. Since, in my opinion for the reasons detailed in Part I of this manual, we have been in de facto WHO Pandemic Alert Phase 4 since the summer of 2005, your preparation status and plan should be implemented given that degree of risk.

## **Your pandemic refuge**

### **Taking refuge within the neighborhood**

Most people will be better off staying in their well-prepared and provisioned home than on the crowded road, in the midst of potential fuel shortages with other pandemic refugees and the criminals seeking to prey on them. If you live in or near a high crime area, you could investigate a safer place to stay during the pandemic in light of certain rising crime rates if police services deteriorate. If relocation is impossible, discuss how you can make your neighborhood safer with family and friends.

### **The rural retreat**

Some people may wish to locate a pandemic refuge outside the city. Remember, it is unnecessary to implement a long-lasting solution. All you need is a temporary solution that is good enough to get you through the 18-month pandemic period. The land you choose should be large enough to accommodate everyone going with you, and it needs to have the resources needed to sustain your group.

### **Books**

If you are an urban resident and plan to leave the city for a retreat in the country, do so early in the pandemic. If your city has the misfortune to be one of the first areas affected by the pandemic, be aware that the federal government's plan relies heavily upon the imposition of quarantines to contain the spread of the pandemic. You might find the road out of town blocked if you wait too long. At a news conference in October 2005, President Bush indicated that he was considering just such an action as quarantining American cities to prevent the spread of avian influenza.

## **Recommended Pandemic Survival Plan triggers**

### **Trigger: WHO Phase 4**

- Locate your pandemic refuge

- Identify the “natural” members of your Pandemic Survivor’s Group.
- Make contact with key potential members of your Group and begin a serious dialog about the pandemic.
- Begin bird flu education of all potential members of your Group.
- Complete a thorough written Pandemic Survival Plan.
- Define your Spartan Energy Budget. Determine how you will meet your alternative energy needs and what items you require to do so
- Specify and identify suppliers for the items in your family’s Spartan Energy Plan
- Begin purchase of all devices for your family’s Spartan Energy Plan
- Determine what foods to stockpile
- Begin your food stockpile.
- Evaluate potential water sources. Devise a plan for collecting, purifying, and filtering water for home consumption.
- Purchase and install all the items necessary for your alternative water supply plan, but do not fill them with water yet.
- Begin saving cash. Try and put away enough free cash to support your family’s needs for 3 months. Find the best way to purchase 1/10<sup>th</sup> oz American Eagle gold and 1 oz American

Eagle silver coins. Convert some cash into these coins for use later.

- Purchase all the items listed in the manual for the Flu Treatment Kit. Discuss getting a 3-month supply of essential medications with your doctor. Ask her to look over and consider prescribing the medications listed in the FTK for you to have on hand in the event a pandemic occurs.
- Monitor the behavior of the bird flu virus and look for signs of localized human-to-human spread that signifies Phase 5 has begun. I will be announcing my view of what pandemic stage we are in on the BFM.com website.
- Consider constructing a solarium for passive home heating.
- If you plan on storing vegetables in a root cellar, dig one now while you can still rent a backhoe and buy lumber at the hardware store.
- Review your plan and look for weaknesses. If possible, try to locate supplies you overlooked or augment supplies or items you need.

### **Trigger: WHO Phase 5**

- Complete food stockpile ASAP. Panic buying may cause some demand shortages during Phase 5, but no true supply shortages will occur until about one month after Phase 6 actually begins.
- Begin formal meetings on pandemic preparedness with the key members of your group.
- While each family needs to write their own PSP that provides for their specific needs, the PSG as a whole also needs to craft

a plan that deals with issues that are applicable to the entire group rather than any specific individual. For instance, the group PSP might include items like group safety and security, mortuary preparations, the neighborhood health network and others.

- Activate your group neighborhood medical network plan. Obtain needed supplemental supplies for provision of advanced home care. All members of the medical network begin regular meetings for planning and implementation for the time when home care will predominate hospital care.
- Provide for remote group members to return to the group's refuge on a moment's notice by giving each an Emergency Travel Kit. The kit needs to be kept close by at all times. Make plans for what to do about pets of remote group members.
- Begin your home or group garden. Consider obtaining or building a temporary greenhouse or cold frame. Obtain enough tools, non-hybrid seeds, fertilizer, lime, and insecticides needed for your garden to last for 2 years without need for re-supply.
- Complete your purchase of any weapons and ammunition you plan to have on hand for home and group defense. Sales of these items are likely to become restricted after the declaration of Phase 6.
- Obtain more gasoline and LP gas for your stockpile, if needed. Consider purchasing more Spartan Energy Plan generating and storage devices (PV panels and deep cycle storage batteries) now because they will be unavailable once Phase 6 is declared. Demand will be enormous and supply will be limited by lack of adequate production facilities.

- Review your plan and look for weaknesses. If possible, try to locate supplies you overlooked or augment supplies or items you need.

### **Trigger: WHO Phase 6**

- If the case fatality rate is  $< 2\%$ , then a mild pandemic is developing.
- If the case fatality rate is  $>2\%$  but less than  $5\%$  then a moderate pandemic is developing.
- If the case fatality rate is  $> 5\%$  a severe pandemic is developing.
- In the event of a severe pandemic, all adults should take an emergency leave of absence from work and focus entirely on pandemic preparedness from this point forward. If the case fatality rate is less than  $5\%$  or the rate is unclear, some adults should take leave while others continue employment until the pandemic declares itself.
- Recall all remote group members to the refuge.
- College students should drop their courses and return home to help the family and group with preparations.
- Complete all preparations.
- Begin holding daily AM planning and action meetings with key Group members. Begin daily PM group meetings with the entire group to discuss the day's activities and unmet needs and concerns. Plan for these meetings to continue for the duration of the pandemic.

- Carefully monitor reports on the pandemic's progress but disregard misinformation and misguided attempts at reassurance that will only cause the unprepared to remain so. Opinions will vary widely, and so will advice. Stick to the case fatality rate of those sick with the disease. That is the information of importance. Nothing else matters. If the rate is 5% or higher, a severe pandemic has begun with the most dire consequences likely. The affects of a moderate pandemic will still be dreadful and cause significant economic and social displacement but not nearly as bad as we can expect from a severe event.
- Hold your ground and don't panic. Keep your group together and be hopeful because you are prepared. Don't leave your prepared refuge. Your chances of survival are much better hunkered down where you are than as a refugee. Avoid becoming a refugee at all costs.
- Monitor the Internet sites like Fluwickie.com for updates. They will be providing raw unfiltered data that will require interpretation but will actually be more reliable than some official media.
- Fill your water containers.
- Review your plan and look for weaknesses. If possible, try to locate supplies you overlooked or augment supplies or items you need.

**Trigger: Pandemic human bird flu reaches your country**

- Stay cool. You and your group are as ready as you can be.
- Any adults who have not already done so should take an emergency leave of absence from their work to focus on completing all pandemic preparedness tasks.

- Continue group meetings everyday. The AM meetings should be reserved for the group leadership and focus on planning and plan implementation. The PM community meetings provide a venue for any group member to speak about their needs and concern. Rumors should be openly discussed and debunked. Fear and panic is best controlled in this way. Stress to each member of the group that their attendance at these PM meetings is of the utmost importance.
- Rumors are always the currency of crisis. Almost all rumors will be false. Disregard them. The quality of the information available will progressively deteriorate from this point forward. The best way to debunk a rumor is to discuss it openly, letting the light of reason burn through and destroy it.
- Above all, work to allay fears and maintain the unity of the group. Fear of the unknown will be high. Discussion will help.
- The group leadership must strive always to keep everyone together. There will be great pressure on some members of the group to leave and go somewhere else that “might be safer.” That scenario is improbable and traveling will certainly be hazardous. Try to keep the group together. Having implemented a solid PSP that you and your group fulfilled is the best guarantee that your refuge will serve the needs of all your group’s members better than or as well as any other location.
- Implement full self-containment procedures now, even though you have access to water and electrical service and police protection.

### **Trigger: Pandemic bird flu reaches your community**

- This is an expected event that you have prepared for. Nothing has changed. Your group is ready to take care of itself. Do not be afraid. Remember that almost everyone will survive, even those who become ill. You are not alone. Everyone in the group is working for the benefit of all the other members giving each the best chance of survival.

### **Trigger: Pandemic flu affects members of your group**

- Early in the pandemic, hospitals and doctor's offices should be functional. Seek conventional treatment. Since the U.S. Government predicts that 8 in 9 flu patients will be treated at home, you are prepared to provide this service.
- Begin home schooling your children if you have not already done so since the social distancing policy will be implemented soon closing the schools.
- Follow your plan. Continue the AM leadership meeting and the PM community meetings. Encourage open discussion and information exchange. Information quality and reliability will be poor even from authoritative sources reported in the media. Discuss rumors, but don't let them hold sway. Debunk them, as they will be baseless for the most part.
- Pull together and help the flu patients and families of these patients cope. Don't be concerned about getting the flu. As stated in the text, "don't worry about contacting the flu, it will contact you". There is really very little chance of avoiding exposure to the virus no matter what you do.

### **Trigger: The First Pandemic Wave Ends**

- We can hope that the first pandemic wave will be relatively mild as was seen in the spring of 1918. Waves last 2 or 3

months. Do not fall victim to hopeful comments by many who think the pandemic is over. This is not consistent with the facts from the past. Above all, keep your group together.

- Able adults should return to work at this point if they have a job available. The inter-pandemic wave period will be the lull before the storm.
- Re-supply any depleted stocks of food, water, and alternative energy devices.
- Review your plan and look for weaknesses. Rotate food stocks and stored water. Add new supplies that you realized were needed or desirable during the first wave.
- Maintain and intensify your home gardening activities. Look for opportunities to purchase needed tools, seeds, fertilizer, and lime.
- Family finances could be in a terrible mess at this point especially if there has been widespread involuntary unemployment. Payments and bills may be overdue. If you find yourself in this condition, *conserve your remaining savings and cash*. Ignore the bill collectors. You may actually be technically bankrupt but don't worry about it now. A lot of folks are going to be in this shape, so you will not be alone. The creditors won't be able to act decisively until after the end of the pandemic. At that time, there will be tremendous pressure to accommodate debtors. The U.S. Congress is likely to pass legislation requiring creditors to reschedule debts, which will solve the problem. What you are going to need to get through this emergency is cash, and gold and silver coins to meet your everyday needs. Remember, the worst is yet to come.

- Decide whether to continue home schooling the group's children or return them to regular school. Past timing of pandemic waves supports continued home schooling. Schools are likely to be closed again before long. The effects of the first wave and the knowledge that a second more severe one is on the way are likely to be very distracting for children and teachers, making the task of providing conventional classroom instruction very difficult.
- College students should remain at the refuge because it is unlikely that they will be able to complete a semester, even if their school reopens before the second wave arrives. Home study and helping out in the community and within the group, like providing home schooling for the youngsters, will be a productive activity.
- Consider adding new members to the group who might need help or bring with them additional skills that could be of value to the group.

**Trigger: The Second Pandemic wave begins**

- This was the bad one in 1918 so “batten down the hatches and full speed ahead”.
- All adults take an emergency leave of absence from work.
- Anyone away from the group's refuge must return ASAP.
- Keep children at home, and college students should stop attending class and begin helping with the group.
- It won't be long before civil society begins to unravel. The hospitals are likely to go first. Food shortages will become apparent.

- The crime rate will rise. If food becomes unavailable, riots will occur.
- Continue your routine--AM leadership meeting, PM community meetings.
- Begin a 24-hour neighborhood safety patrol to help guard against crime.
- Communicate with local police or sheriff contacts for guidance and for information on crime in your area.

### **Trigger: Closure of hospitals, clinics, and doctor's offices**

- If medical resources become limited as expected, hospitals and doctor's offices will close. Medical professionals participating in your PSG will then be free to return to the neighborhood and activate the medical network. Since reliable hospital care will not be available until after the conclusion of this wave, almost all care will occur at home.

### **Trigger: Mortuary services become overwhelmed**

- Expect the number of sick people in the area around you and within your group to rise. Mortuary services will soon be overcome and unable to accept new bodies. Temporary morgues will be established, but burial within the neighborhood of deceased group members is a better way to keep track of them than giving that responsibility to the authorities at this point in the pandemic.

### **Trigger: Failure of the electric grid**

- In the event that this occurs, the risk for civil disorder and anarchy will be high. If you have considered this in your PSP and have a neighborhood defense plan, implement it now.

### **Trigger: Loss of effective community police and fire services**

- The group will need to depend upon its safety officer and members of the neighborhood watch for protection usually provided by these community servants. Deterring criminal acts and defending the group from those with violent intent will be important services to the group. Providing emergency fire service and helping group members transport sick and deceased family members will also be required of the watch.
- Monitor police scanners and local media reports for civil unrest.
- Hunker down and let the events pass by you. Don't become a refugee.
- Be prepared to defend your refuge. United you stand, divided you fall.

### **Trigger: End of the second wave**

- What a relief!
- Have a party.
- Able-bodied adults return to work.
- Re-supply essential items. Rotate stock.
- Continue home schooling because there may be a third wave and if it comes, the schools will close again. The education your kids are getting is far superior to what organized education can do for them now. It will take years for the school system to return to the same level of the ante-pandemic. Seriously think about continuing to home school the children for a while longer.

### **Trigger: Beginning of the third wave**

- If we have a third pandemic wave, its severity will depend on the extent of herd immunity achieved during the first two waves. If immunity is high, this wave will probably be relatively mild, if low it could be quite severe.
- Adults immune from influenza may continue working during the third wave unless they are needed at home for other critical tasks.
- Continue home schooling.
- Hospitals and clinics are likely to be open but very dysfunctional--operating at well over capacity. Acutely ill flu patients, patients who suffered complications of influenza--like stroke and heart attack, and the usual load of patients with non-influenza medical illness who have become critically ill during the many months when technically advanced healthcare and lifesaving medications were unavailable, will occupy all beds.
- College students should not yet return to class because their institutions will inevitably close again. The pandemic experience will provide a much better education than anything they could possibly have learned in school. They will experience history in the making.
- The number of group members becoming ill with bird flu during this wave will be low. Some groups might escape this wave completely. By now, the police and fire service have adjusted to the restrictions imposed upon them by the pandemic and should remain functional during the third wave. Home defense against roving gangs may still be needed but hopefully not. The crime rate, especially burglary and robbery, will skyrocket as the unemployment rate will increase and the

number of economically destitute people grows--conditions historically associated with high crime rates. So, it might be wise to continue the neighborhood watch, at a lesser degree of readiness, for a year or two longer. Ask your local sheriff or police chief for guidance.

**Trigger: End of the third wave.**

- This will mark the end of the pandemic.

**The immediate post-pandemic period**

The formal ending of the pandemic will be a great relief to everyone, but coming to terms with its aftermath will present an entirely new set of seemingly endless problems. We will all be working to re-establish normal life although in truth, life will never be the same again for pandemic survivors. Nor will you ever look over your hedge at your neighbors and think of them in a disconnected, nonchalant way--not after all you went through together.

Using the post-1918 pandemic psychology as a guide, everyone will unconsciously conspire to quickly forget the pandemic and its resulting trials and tribulations. We will rush to bury the past just as fast as we rush to exhume and properly bury those who died from our group.

But don't be in too much of a rush about your dead. The morticians will have a big backlog. It is likely to take many months before they will be able to assist you. There will be a new baby boom. The economy will come back, and things will slowly return to normal. But, they won't, not completely, not for those of us who survived the Great Bird Flu Pandemic. Life will never be the same for those who survived. And when we put the world back together post-pandemic, let's do it better by relying on what we learned about people and ourselves during this crisis.