



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY ■ DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ■
DISEASE CONTROL BRANCH

November 2005

GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS REGARDING PERSONAL STOCKPILING OF OSELTAMIVIR PHOSPHATE (TAMIFLU®)

Outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza (“bird flu”) have been ongoing in poultry in a number of countries in Southeast Asia and Europe. In addition, a limited number of sporadic human cases and deaths from avian influenza continue to be reported from Southeast Asia.

No sustained or ongoing transmission (spread) of H5N1 avian influenza among humans has occurred in Southeast Asia. To date there has been no H5N1 avian influenza in poultry or humans in the US.

The Riverside County Public Health Department strongly discourages healthcare providers from prescribing and the public from requesting Tamiflu (influenza antiviral medication) for private stockpiling purposes in response to the public’s concerns for the possibility of an influenza pandemic related to the current avian influenza situation in Southeast Asia. This recommendation is based on the following factors:

- There are limited supplies of Tamiflu in the US. Hoarding of this drug because of concerns about a future pandemic may mean that Tamiflu becomes unavailable for those who need it most during the current regular flu season.
- The indiscriminate and inappropriate use of Tamiflu may promote the development of resistance to this important drug among influenza viruses.
- The highest current priority for use of Tamiflu is for treatment of people during the upcoming regular flu season who are at highest risk from serious complications from influenza infection (e.g. persons older than 65 years, young children, and person with certain chronic diseases).
- The next highest priority for use of Tamiflu and other influenza antiviral medications is for prophylaxis in persons at high risk of serious complications from influenza infection who are exposed to influenza (e.g. household in which someone has been diagnosed with influenza or hospital or nursing home with an outbreak of influenza) during the regular flu season.

It is important to educate the public about steps they can take to keep themselves and others healthy this flu season. These include getting their flu shots and the pneumococcal vaccine (when appropriate), covering their coughs, staying home from work or school when sick with cough illness and washing hands after coughing or touching respiratory secretions.

For additional information, please contact Disease Control at 951-358-5107