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Preparedness and
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*Some material
adapted from
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the Public Health
Agency of Canada*

Prepare yourself for an emergency

*"Good luck happens when preparedness meets opportunity"
- Anonymous*

We never know when a transportation emergency like the March train derailment at Halbrite might occur. We also don't know when the next influenza pandemic will happen. But medical experts note two things: that it has been 38 years since the last influenza pandemic, and the avian influenza virus is a possible trigger for the next human pandemic. In response to this concern, health care organizations around the globe are busy preparing for the next pandemic, developing plans, stockpiling key medical supplies and preparing for the worst-case scenarios that could see tens of millions of people stricken with pandemic influenza.

"It's important that we are all prepared for the next pandemic," says Dr. Shauna Hudson, Medical Health Officer for Sun Country Regional Health Authority. "Not just health care providers, but businesses, municipalities, schools and individuals need to be ready." "We can estimate how many people could become ill during a pandemic," Dr. Hudson says. "If those predictions come true, there could be serious disruptions to our everyday life."

It's not possible to predict when the next pandemic will arrive. It won't necessarily occur during the traditional October to March influenza season. It can happen at any time of the year.

In Canada, it is predicted that between 4.5 million and 10.5 million people could become ill.

Of that number, two million to five million Canadians would require medical care while 34,000 to 138,000 might need hospitalization.

In Sun Country Health Region (SCHR), it's estimated that over 18,500 people could be stricken with pandemic influenza during the first and second waves of the pandemic. That represents almost 35 per cent of SCHR's 53,000 residents. Of those people, 123 to 364 people could require hospitalization. The number of deaths is predicted to range from 38 to 92.

The numbers of seriously ill people during a severe pandemic will pose some significant challenges for the health care system, says Dr. Hudson.

"The health system will be able to focus on caring for those people who are in need of acute care in a hospital setting," she says. "But because resources will be dedicated to pandemic care, there will be serious disruptions to other services."

For example, surgeries could be cancelled, elective hospitalizations could be cancelled and home care services could be significantly reduced.

She adds that shortages of employees will hinder the ability of governments to provide services, such as garbage collection or transit, while many private businesses may not be able to operate.



Thoughts:

From the desk of Calvin Tant,
President/CEO,
Sun Country Regional Health Authority

Lack of certainty creates a very real dilemma for all of us. We know an influenza pandemic is coming, but we don't know when. We know it could be mild, but we also know it could come with a ferocity that would shake the foundations of our social structure.

Sun Country Regional Health Authority believes we must all prepare now. By preparing, we can slow the spread of the disease when it comes and reduce the social upheaval it could bring. As well, much of what we can do now will result in disease prevention in our everyday lives, and prepare us for other, non-health emergencies.

An influenza pandemic may be inevitable but we can change the outcome if we do certain things.

For example:

- If we all do something as simple as wash our hands frequently and properly, the spread of an influenza pandemic can be slowed.
- If parents plan to provide care for themselves and their children during a pandemic, medical professionals will be better able to give care to those in extreme need.
- If families stockpile necessities for all emergencies, they will be prepared during a pandemic.
- If businesses plan for their operations during a pandemic, they will be better able to serve their interests and those of the customers who rely on them.

While a pandemic will be much more severe than a regular influenza season, the steps outlined in this issue of The Regional Sun will be useful in helping to prevent the spread of the virus during all types of influenza situations and in helping us all to understand what we might face in the future.



Emergency instructions

*Clip this list
and tape it to your refrigerator*

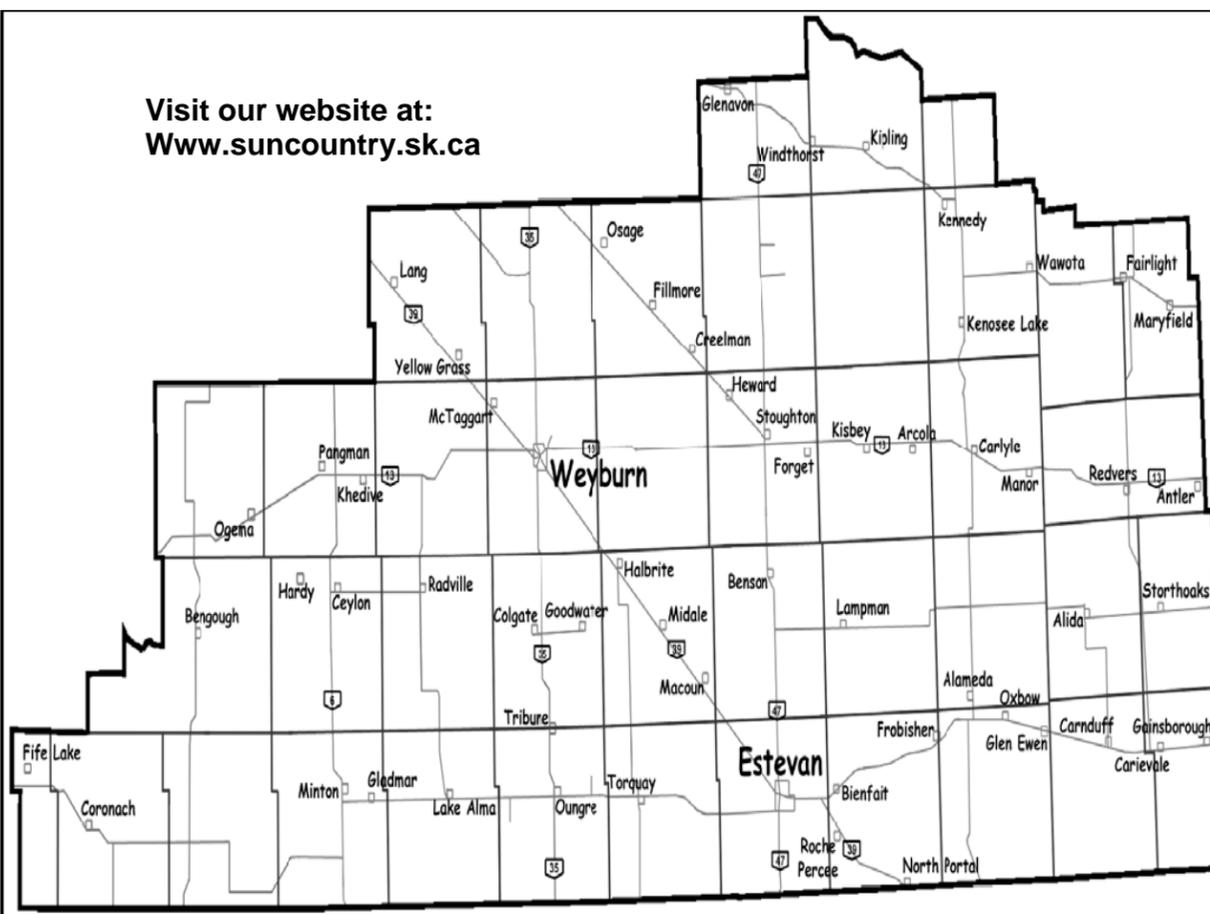
When to call 911

- To report a fire. To report a crime. To save a life.
- For non-emergency calls, use the seven-digit numbers listed in your local phone book for police, fire, paramedic services, and for the Sun Country Health Region.

In case of a major emergency

- Follow your emergency plan.
- Get your emergency kit.
- Make sure you are safe before assisting others.
- Listen to the radio or television for information from authorities. Local officials may advise you to stay where you are. Follow their instructions.
- Stay put until all is safe or until you are ordered to evacuate.

Visit our website at:
www.suncountry.sk.ca



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Flu Prevention Checklist

You can play an active role in staying healthy and preventing the spread of influenza, whether it's the seasonal flu that circulates each winter or pandemic influenza.

Follow these simple steps:

- **Get an annual flu shot.**

Make sure your family members get a flu shot too!

- **Wash your hands frequently.**

Twenty seconds of hand washing with warm water and soap helps remove bacteria and viruses. Remember to wash before and after eating, after using the bathroom, after coughing or sneezing, and after touching surfaces that may have been contaminated by other people.

- **Cover up when you cough or sneeze.**

Use a tissue, or raise your arm up to your face to cough or sneeze into your sleeve. If you use a tissue, dispose of it as soon as possible and wash your hands immediately.

- **Keep shared surface areas clean.**

Doorknobs, light switches, telephones, keyboards and other surfaces can become contaminated with all kinds of bacteria and viruses. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of these surfaces can help.

- **If you get sick, stay home!**

If you go out when you're sick, you may spread your illness to co-workers, classmates, neighbours or others. It may take you longer to get better if you are not well rested. Wait until you no longer have a fever and you have stopped coughing.

- **Talk about staying healthy.**

Encourage others to follow these simple steps. If you have children, be a good role model. Teach them to count to 20 while washing their hands and show them how to cover up when they cough or sneeze.

**For additional information, visit the
Public Health Agency of Canada
at www.influenza.gc.ca**

Call Healthline at 1-877-800-0002

or visit Healthline at

www.healthlineonline.com/

Emergency Preparedness Guide

You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for a minimum of 72 hours during an emergency. If a disaster happens in your community, it may take emergency workers some time to get to you as they help those in desperate need.

STEP 1. Know the risks

STEP 2. Make a plan

STEP 3. Prepare an emergency kit

Step 1. Know the Risks, Know Your Region

Although the consequences of disasters can be similar, knowing the risks specific to your region can help you prepare yourself better. In Southeast Saskatchewan, the hazards could include:

Blackout	Transportation accident
Blizzard	Hazardous material spills
Drought	Hurricane
Terrorism	Wildfire
Earthquake	Industrial accident
Tornado	Infectious disease outbreak
Flood	

Step 2. Make a Plan

Every Canadian household needs an emergency plan. It will help you and your family know what to do in case of an emergency. Remember, your family may not be together when a disaster occurs. Plan how to meet or contact one another and discuss what you would do in different situations.

Use the following pages to create your plan. Most of this information can be filled out on your own. You may need to get some information from your municipality. Keep this document in an easy-to-find, easy-to-remember place (for example, with your emergency kit).

You might also want to make a photocopy of this plan and keep it in your car and/or at work.

To learn more about emergency preparedness or to order more copies of this guide call:
1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)
TTY: 1-800-926-9105
Monday to Friday,
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time
Or visit: www.GetPrepared.ca

Your household plan

Escape routes

Plan emergency exits from each room of your home. Try to think of two possibilities for each room. If you live in an apartment, do not plan to use the elevators. Also, identify an escape route from your neighbourhood in case you are ordered to evacuate.

Escape route from neighbourhood:

Meeting places

Identify safe places where everyone should meet if they have to leave home during an emergency.

Safe meeting place near home:

Safe meeting place outside our neighbourhood:

Children

Ask your children's school or day care about their emergency policies. Find out how they will communicate with families during an emergency. Find out what type of authorization the school or day care requires to release your children to a designated person, if you can't pick them up yourself. Make sure the school or day care has updated contact information for parents, caregivers and designated persons.

Designated person 1: Phone: _____

Designated person 2: Phone: _____

People with special health needs

Establish a personal support network of friends, relatives, health-care providers, co-workers and neighbours who understand your special needs. Write down details about your medical conditions, allergies, surgeries, family medical history, medications, health screenings, recent vaccinations, emergency contacts and insurance information. Talk to your doctor about preparing a grab-and-go bag with a two-week supply of medications and medical supplies, if possible. Include prescriptions and medical documents. Remember that pharmacies may be closed for some time, even after an emergency is over.

Health information:

Medications and medical equipment:

Grab-and-go bag location:

Plan for pets

Remember that pets are not allowed in some public shelters or hotels because of certain health regulations. Also, some people might be allergic to and/or frightened by your pets. Plan to take your pets with you to a relative or friend's home, or identify a "pet-friendly" hotel or pet boarding facilities in advance.

Location: _____

Plan for specific risks

What should you do in case of a blackout? A blizzard? Write instructions for the risks that are most likely to occur in your region.

Neighbourhood safety plan

Work with your neighbours to make sure everyone is taken care of in your neighbourhood. Identify people who might need extra help during an emergency. Assign "block buddies" to take care of each other.

Emergency contact information

Photocopy this list. Put a copy close to your telephone. Program these phone numbers into your home phone and cell phone.

Local emergency numbers

Police

Ambulance: **911**

Other:

Out-of-town contact

Name:

Home phone:

Work phone:

Cell phone:

Home address:

Non-emergency numbers

Police: _____

Fire: _____

Health clinic: _____

Other contact numbers: _____

Your Family contact

Name: _____

Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____

Cell phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Home address: _____

Friend/Neighbour

Name: _____

Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____

Cell phone _____

Email: _____

Home address _____

Family doctor

Patient's name: _____

Doctor's name _____

Phone: _____

Insurance agent/company

Agent's/company's name:

Phone: _____

Policy Number _____

Safe home instructions

Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector, smoke detector and fire extinguisher. If you live in an apartment or are staying in a hotel, know where the fire alarms are located. Everyone in your home should know where to find the fire extinguisher. All capable adults and older children should know how to use it.

Older children and adults should know how to turn off your home's water, electricity and gas. Make large, easy-to-see signs for water and gas shut-offs as well as for the breaker panel or fuse box. Teach children how and when to dial 911. Teach children how to call the out-of-town contact person. Ensure your children know where the emergency kit is located.

Fire extinguisher

Location: _____

Water valve

Location: _____

Shut-off instructions:

Utility company phone number:

Electrical box

Location:

Utility company phone number _____

Gas valve

Location:

Shut-off instructions (only shut off gas when authorities tell you to do so):

Utility company phone number:

Basement Floor drain

Location:

(always ensure it is clear of all items.)

Step 3. **Prepare an emergency kit**

**Be prepared to be
self-sufficient
for at least 72 hours!**

In an emergency, you will need some basic supplies. You may need to get by without power or tap water.

You may have some of the items already, such as a flashlight, battery-operated radio, food, water and blankets. The key is to make sure they are organized and easy to find. Would you be able to find your flashlight in the dark?

Make sure your kit is easy to carry. Keep it in a backpack, duffel bag or suitcase with wheels, in an easy-to-reach, accessible place, such as your front hall closet. Make sure everyone in the household knows where your emergency kit is located.

Basic emergency kit

- Water – at least two litres of water per person per day. Include small bottles that can be carried easily in case of an evacuation order
- Food that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dried foods (remember to replace the food and water once a year)
- Manual can-opener
- Wind-up or battery-powered flashlight (and extra batteries)
- Wind-up or battery-powered radio (and extra batteries)
- First aid kit
- Special items such as prescription medications, infant formula and equipment for people with disabilities
- Extra keys for your car and house
- Some cash in smaller bills, such as \$10 bills (travelers cheques are also useful) and change for pay phones
- A copy of your emergency plan and contact information

Other recommended items

- Candles and matches or lighter (remember to place candles in sturdy containers and to put them out before going to sleep)
- A change of clothing and footwear for each household member
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each household member
- A whistle (in case you need to attract attention)
- Garbage bags for personal sanitation
- Toilet paper and other personal care supplies
- Safety gloves
- Basic tools (hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, work gloves)
- Small fuel-driven stove and fuel (follow manufacturer's directions and store properly)
- Two litres of water per person per day for cooking and cleaning

Basic car kit

If you have a car, prepare a small kit and keep it in the vehicle.

The basic kit should include:

- Food that won't spoil (such as energy bars)
- Water
- Blanket
- Extra clothing and shoes
- Candle in a deep can and matches
- Flashlight (wind-up or battery-powered)
- First aid kit with seatbelt cutter
- Warning light or road flares
- Small shovel, scraper and snowbrush
- List of contact numbers

Other items to keep in your car

- Sand, salt or cat litter (non clumping)
- Antifreeze, windshield washer fluid
- Tow rope and jumper cables
- Fire extinguisher
- Roadmaps
- Whistle

Prepare now

- Don't wait for an emergency to happen. There are things you can do now to prepare yourself and your loved ones.
- By simply reading this guide, you are well on your way
- Complete this guide one evening this week or during a weekend.
- Prepare your kit.
- Write yourself a reminder to update your emergency plan one year from now. On this date next year, re-view your information, practice your emergency evacuation, test the batteries in your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector and restock the contents of your kit.

Evacuation orders

- Authorities will not ask you to leave your home unless they have reason to believe you are in danger.
- If you are ordered to evacuate, take your emergency kit, essential medications, copies of prescriptions, personal identification for each family member, copies of essential family documentation and a cellular phone, if you have one.
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities.
- If you have time, call or e-mail your out-of-town contact. Tell them where you are going and when you expect to arrive. Once you are safe, let them know.
- Tell them if any family members have become separated.
- If you have time, leave a note telling others when you left and where you are.
- Shut off water and electricity if officials tell you to.
- Leave natural gas service on, unless officials tell you to turn it off. (If you turn off the gas, the gas company has to reconnect it. In a major emergency, it could take weeks for a professional to respond. You would be without gas for heating and cooking.)
- Take pets with you.
- Lock your home.

Plan for a pandemic

Unlike a natural catastrophe, such as an earthquake or tornado, an influenza pandemic, when it emerges, will last several months and affect thousands in Sun Country Health Region (SCHR), says Dr. Shauna Hudson, Chairperson of the SCHR Pandemic Steering Committee.

“An influenza pandemic could have serious repercussions for everyone and the effects will be wide-sweeping, across all levels of society,” she says. That’s why everyone needs to prepare, whether it is individuals, businesses, educational institutions, or municipalities.

Governments at local levels need to examine their emergency response plans to see if they meet the special challenges of a severe pandemic that may disrupt normal services for months.

If 15 to 35 per cent of municipal workers are at home ill, how will infrastructure repairs, garbage pickup and winter road maintenance be completed?

Who will administer emergency payroll services?

If a civic worker is home ill or caring for a child, who is the designated alternate to keep the job going?

Thinking creatively, perhaps looking at a partnership with a neighbouring municipality to share equipment and workers, might be a possible strategy for local governments, says Dr. Hudson.

School divisions also need to be aware of what they will face in a health emergency. Influenza can spread rapidly amongst children.

Some schools might be closed. Others may remain open, but the absentee rate for students and teachers could run as high as 30 per cent.

“Even post-secondary institutions need to be ready and establish plans outlining what they need to do during an influenza pandemic,” says Dr. Hudson.

Like municipalities, educational institutions are advised to have planning committees in place to identify important issues such as liaising with health regions, providing clear lines of communication to parents and students through Web sites or letters, and continuing to emphasize to students and staff basic hygiene issues such as hand-washing and tissue use.

Being prepared for a serious health emergency, says Dr. Hudson “...will make us ready for any emergency – whether it’s a natural catastrophe or severe influenza pandemic.”

TIPS and Safe Ideas

- Make sure that everyone in your home knows how to get out quickly. Practice at least once a year.
- Make copies of birth and marriage certificates, passports, licenses, wills, land deeds and insurance. Keep the copies in a safe place both inside and outside your home.
- Don’t forget to put pet food and water with your emergency kit.
- Plan for each family member to call or e-mail the same out-of town contact person in the event of an emergency.
- Choose an out-of-town contact who lives far enough away that he or she will probably not be affected by the same event.
- If you are new to Canada or don’t have an out-of-town contact person, make arrangements through friends, cultural associations or local community organizations.
- Learn about first aid. You could save a life. Along with making emergency plans and preparing an emergency kit, knowing first aid could save a life. Contact your local Canadian Red Cross or St. John Ambulance to find out about first aid courses offered in your area.
- Ensure you have a corded phone in your home, as most cordless phones will not work during a power outage.
- Automated bank machines and their networks may not work during an emergency or blackout. You may have difficulty using debit or credit cards.

Pre-prepared Emergency Kits:

Canadian Red Cross kits are available at www.redcross.ca.

St. John Ambulance and Salvation Army kits can be purchased at www.sja.ca or from retailers across Canada.

Visit www.GetPrepared.ca for a complete list of these retailers.

Pandemic

Influenza

Understanding Pandemic Influenza

Most of us have heard about the flu (or Influenza). But what is bird flu and how is a flu pandemic different from the seasonal flu? The following information helps to explain the difference between seasonal, avian and pandemic flu.

	Avian (Bird) Flu	Seasonal (Human) Flu	Pandemic Flu
What is it?	A disease caused by influenza viruses carried and spread among birds.	An infection caused by influenza viruses carried and spread among humans.	A new strain of influenza virus that spreads quickly worldwide. It is carried and spread among humans. Humans have little or no immunity against it.
How does it spread?	Wild birds are the main carriers. Domestic birds (like chickens and turkeys) get the virus from wild birds and may become seriously ill. Humans do not easily contract bird flu viruses. Humans can only get bird flu by handling infected birds or coming into contact with contaminated feces. There is no evidence that bird flu is passed by eating cooked poultry	Breathing droplets that have been sneezed or coughed into the air by someone with the flu, or having the droplets land on the surface of your eye. Shaking hands with an infected person or touching a contaminated surface and then touching your own eyes, nose or mouth.	Spread the same way as seasonal flu.
What is the connection?	What is the connection between bird flu, human flu, and pandemic flu? Bird flu + Human Flu can = Pandemic flu One way pandemic flu can occur is if bird flu mixes with human flu and creates a new strain of flu virus that can spread easily from human to human.		