



# COUNTY OF ORANGE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

JULIETTE A. POULSON, RN, MN  
DIRECTOR

HILDY MEYERS, MD, MPH  
ACTING HEALTH OFFICER

DAVID M. SOULELES, MPH  
CHIEF, PUBLIC HEALTH OPERATIONS

MAILING ADDRESS:  
405 W 5<sup>th</sup> STREET, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
SANTA ANA, CA 92701

TELEPHONE: (714) 834-3155  
FAX: (714) 834-5506

## PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES



### Guidelines for Orange County Physicians and Other Healthcare Providers Regarding Personal Stockpiling of Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®)

November 10, 2005

As of November 9, 2005, 125 human cases of avian influenza H5N1 and 64 deaths have been reported from Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Cambodia since avian outbreaks of this strain began in winter 2003. Infected wild birds and poultry continue to be detected in these countries as well as China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Turkey, and Croatia. Attempts to eliminate H5N1 from the affected areas have been unsuccessful and additional avian outbreaks and human cases are expected. For more information and for guidelines for surveillance, diagnostic evaluation, and infection control precautions in patients returning from involved areas with fever and respiratory symptoms, please see [http://www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/af/af\\_update2.pdf](http://www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/af/af_update2.pdf). Please contact Orange County Epidemiology at 714-834-8180 with any suspect human cases.

**Thus far, human cases have been linked to contact with poultry or poultry products and only rare, limited person-to-person transmission has occurred in close contacts. There has been no sustained or ongoing transmission of avian influenza H5N1 among humans in affected areas. To date, there has been no H5N1 detected in poultry or humans in the U.S. In response to the public's concerns for the possibility of an influenza pandemic related to the current H5N1 situation in Southeast Asia and reports of public interest in personal stockpiling of antivirals, Orange County Public Health has issued the following guidelines for healthcare providers.**

Orange County Public Health strongly discourages healthcare providers from prescribing and the public from requesting oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) or other influenza antiviral medications for personal stockpiling purposes. Reasons that personal stockpiling would not be beneficial include:

- The indiscriminate and inappropriate use of Tamiflu® may promote the development and spread of resistance among influenza viruses to this drug, which might be useful against a pandemic influenza strain.
- There are limited supplies of Tamiflu® in the U.S. Hoarding of this drug now 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 highest current priority for use of Tamiflu® is for treatment of people during the regular flu season who are at highest risk from serious complications from influenza infection (e.g. persons older than 65 years, young children, and persons 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.

People can be proactive in keeping themselves and others healthy this flu season by: getting vaccinated against influenza (and pneumococcus, when appropriate), avoiding ill people, covering their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, staying home when sick, washing hands after coughing or touching respiratory secretions, and avoiding touching their mouth or nose.