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The current bird flu outbreak in Asia has the potential for becoming pandemic. The strain of flu virus in Asia currently only transmits from birds to humans, and has severe and sometime deadly effects. But if this strain changes and becomes easily transmissible from human to human, it could spread rapidly and be dreadful.

The exact nature of a pandemic flu virus is unknown, so there is no immediate vaccine available to protect humans. If a pandemic event occurs it will be a significant challenge for health agencies to develop and distribute a vaccine quickly enough to prevent the spread of infections.

How to Minimize the Risks of Infection?

There are several things that can be done to reduce the risk of getting sick and limiting the spread of disease.

TABLE 1 – How to Minimize the Risks of Infections

- ✓ **Be Educated and Stay Informed**
- ✓ **Stay Healthy**
- ✓ **Stop Germs From Spreading**
- ✓ **Follow CDC Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting Environmental Surfaces Outlined Below**

Be educated and stay informed. Keep up-to-date by reading articles in publications or on the web and listening to radio or television programs that provide relevant information about pandemic flu.

Stay healthy. Eat a balanced diet, exercise daily, get enough sleep, drink plenty of water and get your seasonal flu shot.

Stop germs from spreading. Here are a few simple yet important things you can do to help prevent the spread of flu viruses:

- Frequently and properly wash hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available then the use of an appropriate hand sanitizer is recommended.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when sneezing or coughing. Throw the used tissue into the trash and wash your hands.
- Stay home from work or school and away from others when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Clean and Disinfect. Some disease-causing germs can live on inanimate surfaces for extended periods of time. Therefore, it is important to properly clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently contacted by humans.

Maintaining Adequate Supply and Source of Disinfectants, Sanitizers, Cleaners and Hand Soaps?

In the event of a pandemic, supplies and services that we count on every day may be unavailable or in short supply. Food, water, medications, surgical masks, plastic gloves and other emergency supplies should be made available. In addition, a facility should have an adequate inventory of disinfectants, sanitizers, cleaners and hand soaps and a reliable primary and secondary source of supply for these items.

TABLE 2 – What Are The Critical Housekeeping Items In the Event of a Pandemic?

- ✓ **Disinfectants**
- ✓ **Hand Sanitizers**
- ✓ **Cleaners**
- ✓ **Hand Soaps**
- ✓ **Paper Towels, Toilet Tissue and Wipers**
- ✓ **Wet Mops (or Microfiber)**

In the event of a pandemic outbreak, there are four (4) primary chemical cleaning product types and two (2) non-chemical type products that will be critical to help control the spread of germs or disease:

1. Disinfectants – Disinfecting contaminated environmental surfaces is critical to controlling the spread of germs and disease.
2. Hand Sanitizers – CDC recommends hand sanitizers be used where water and/or soap is not available.
3. Cleaners – CDC and EPA both encourage the removal of gross soils from environmental surfaces as an important process to control the spread of infections.
4. Hand Soaps – CDC recommends frequent hand washing as the single most effective way to control the spread of disease. Adequate hand soap inventory should be maintained.
5. Paper towels, toilet tissue and wipers.
6. Wet mops (or microfiber)

Buyers of critical items should align themselves with strategic suppliers that provide a primary and secondary source for each critical item. It is common practice for suppliers in the event of shortages to take care of their best customers first.

TABLE 3 – What Does the End User Need to Do?

- ✓ **Have Programs in Place with Strategic Suppliers**
- ✓ **Have Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizing Programs in Place**
- ✓ **Have Sufficient Inventories of Table 2 Items in Stock on Premise Because Deliveries May Be Interrupted**

Coastwide Laboratories manufactures and distributes disinfectants, sanitizers, cleaners and hand soaps to thousands of facilities throughout the Northwestern United States. We are committed to making certain that if a pandemic outbreak occurs that we will be able to supply all of our customers with adequate supplies of disinfectants, sanitizers, cleaners and hand soaps without interruption, backorders or shortages.

TABLE 4 – What Should Suppliers (Coastwide) Do?

- ✓ **Agreements with Manufacturers and Raw Material Suppliers**
- ✓ **Provide a Minimum of Two Sources of Supply for Critical Items**
- ✓ **Maintain Adequate Raw Material Inventories**
- ✓ **Have a Written Pandemic Program That Focuses on Customer Needs**

We are able to make this commitment because we are both a manufacturer and distributor. We manufacture our Coastwide Brand disinfectants, sanitizers, cleaners and hand soaps in a manufacturing plant located in Salem, Oregon. In addition, we are a major distributor for large manufacturers of these items including GoJo, Johnson Diversey, 3M, Portion Pac and other nationally recognized manufacturers.

Coastwide Laboratories' dual sourcing approach offers customers a primary source and a secondary source of these items.

This allows Coastwide Laboratories to make the following commitment to all of its customers in the event of a pandemic outbreak:

1. Coastwide will work closely with its primary vendors of disinfectants, sanitizers, cleaners and hand soaps to make certain that an uninterrupted supply of these items is made available to customers in the unfortunate event that a pandemic outbreak occurs.
2. Coastwide will maintain a minimum of three (3) months of raw materials in the Salem manufacturing plant to meet the needs of our strategic customers in the categories of disinfectants, sanitizers, cleaners and hand soaps.

Note: Inventorying finished goods for an extended period of time is not a good practice. The product shelf lives can be compromised if stored and are unused for long periods of time.

What are the principles of cleaning and disinfecting environmental surfaces?

Below is a summary of the section titled "Principles of Cleaning and Disinfecting Environmental Surfaces" found on pages 71-77 in the CDC publication titled, "Guidelines For Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities" published in 2003.

- ✓ Microbiologically contaminated surfaces can serve as reservoirs of potential pathogens, but these surfaces generally are not directly associated with the transmission of infections to humans.
- ✓ The transmission of microorganisms from environmental surfaces to patients is primarily by hand contact with the surface.
- ✓ Hand hygiene is important to minimize the impact of the transmission.
- ✓ Cleaning and disinfecting is fundamental in reducing the potential for incidence of viral and bacterial infections.
- ✓ Good cleaning and disinfecting principles take into account the intended use of the surface or item in the facility.
- ✓ CDC considers "environmental surfaces" to represent surfaces that generally do not come into direct contact with patients during care.
- ✓ Environmental surfaces carry the least risk of disease transmission and can be safely decontaminated using less rigorous methods than those used on medical instruments and devices.
- ✓ Housekeeping surfaces can be divided into two groups – those with minimal hand-contact such as floors and ceilings and those with frequent hand-contact known as "high touch surfaces".
- ✓ High touch surfaces like doorknobs, light switches, wall areas around toilets and urinals and fixture knobs should be cleaned and/or disinfected more frequently than surfaces with minimal hand contact.
- ✓ Cleaning is the necessary first step of any disinfection process. Cleaning is a form of decontamination that renders the environmental surface safe to handle or use. This decontamination is accomplished by removing organic matter, salts and visible soils, all of which interfere with microbial inactivation.
- ✓ The physical action of scrubbing combined with the detergency of surfactants in the cleaning agents remove large numbers of the microorganisms from surfaces.

- ✓ Housekeeping surfaces require regular cleaning and removal of soil and dust.
- ✓ Most, if not all, housekeeping surfaces need to be cleaned only with detergent and water or a detergent-disinfectant, depending upon the nature of the surface and the type and degree of the contamination.
- ✓ Disinfectant-detergent formulations registered by EPA are used for environmental surface cleaning, but the actual physical removal of microorganisms and soil by wiping or scrubbing is probably as important, if not more so, than any antimicrobial effect of the disinfecting agent used.
- ✓ Therefore, cost, safety, product-surface compatibility, environmental compatibility and acceptability by housekeepers can be the main criteria for selecting an EPA registered product.
- ✓ Extraordinary cleaning and decontamination of floors in health-care settings is unwarranted. Studies have demonstrated that disinfection of floors offers no advantage over regular detergent/water cleaning and has minimal or no impact on the occurrence of health-care associated infections.
- ✓ Minimize contamination of cleaning solutions and cleaning tools.
- ✓ Cleaning solutions should be replaced frequently. Bucket solutions become contaminated almost immediately during cleaning, and continued use of the solution will transfer increasing number of microorganisms to each subsequent surface to be cleaned. A variety of "bucket" methods have been designed to address the frequency with which cleaning solutions are replaced.
- ✓ Mop heads and cleaning cloths can also be a source for spreading contaminants. Laundering of cloths and mop heads after use and allowing them to dry before re-use can minimize the degree of contamination. Microfiber wipes and microfiber mops can also be helpful.

Where can I get more information?

We appreciate your vigilance and commitment to protecting the health of your workers, patients, building occupants and customers. If you have questions or comments about this document or would like additional information please contact Coastwide Laboratories by visiting our website at www.coastwidelabs.com or call (800) 775-3289.