



Introduction

Over 3000 Australians die from influenza (flu) and/or pneumonia every year and many more suffer bouts of flu throughout the year.

Over the next four pages we will explore the topic of human flu and Avian flu. Though the two conditions are linked and share some common features, each has peculiarities that are unique and need to be understood. We explore the probable consequences, how to care for ourselves and simple precautions we can take to help contain any possible flu outbreaks, epidemics or pandemics.

The World Health Organisation and the Australian government are currently warning us about the possibility of a new form of influenza, called the Avian Influenza or Bird Flu, mutating and taking on a form that can be spread from human to human.

Curriculum focus

PD/H/PE – Personal Health Choices, Safe Living, Communicating

English – Reading, Presenting, Research, Writing

HSIE – Social Systems and Structural Outcomes

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- understand how we get influenza, how it spreads, how it affects people and how we can help prevent its spread
- discover that Australia has had a flu epidemic in the past and learn how it affected the country
- build a vocabulary and understanding of common words associated with influenza
- understand the simple precautions we must take to prepare ourselves for a possible outbreak
- describe safe practices that are appropriate to varying situations and environments
- appraise the values and attitudes of different groups within society in relation to health and lifestyle
- explain how Australian people, systems and communities are globally interconnected and recognise global responsibility.

Useful website links:

www.csl.com.au/What_Is_Flu.asp

www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/world/2005/bird_flu/default.stm

www.who.int

www.science.org.au/nova/090/090box02.htm
(Spanish Flu and Avian Flu)

www.influenzacentre.org

www.immunise.health.gov.au
(Department of Health and Ageing)

www.health.gov.au
(Pandemic Influenza and Pandemic Plan)

Discussion questions

- What is influenza (the flu)?
- How do we catch the flu?
- How does the flu spread from person to person?
- How does the flu affect most people?
- What can we do to help prevent us from getting the flu?
- How can the flu be treated and what steps can we take to help us feel better?
- Who is most at risk and can get very sick from the flu?
- If we catch the flu, about how long does it last?
- What is the difference between an influenza epidemic and an influenza pandemic?

Checking your answers

Divide the class into internet research groups. Have the students check the answers they gave to the discussion questions by reading the Health for Kids website article at: http://kidshealth.org/kid/ill_injure/sick/flu.html

Classroom activities

Look it up

Have students find out the dictionary meaning of the following words: *influenza, epidemic, pandemic, virus, strains, quarantine* and *vaccination*.

Ask students to suggest their own related words. Hold a class discussion on the meaning of each word. Did any students find other meanings for these words or useful related words? Can students define the difference between an influenza epidemic and an influenza pandemic?

What is flu and how do we get it?

Have each student use their internet research results to design and complete their own 'What We Know About Flu' sheet.

Healthy habits to hinder the spread of flu

Encourage the students to create a poster or chart titled "Stop the Spread of Germs". Discuss the idea that being fit, active and healthy may not protect us from flu, and that the flu is spread easily so we should avoid public places and close contact with other people. Do students agree with these ideas?

Classroom debate: surgical face masks

Recently we saw people in Asia wearing surgical masks to protect themselves against outbreaks of the new strains of flu viruses.

Debate the following topic: "Are people who wear face masks in public to protect themselves from influenza wasting their time and money?"

Have students design and decorate their own style of protective face mask.

Research project

Have the students research the Spanish Flu pandemic that hit Australia in 1918. Ask them to include facts such as:

- how many people died in Australia and worldwide (20-40 million)
- where it came from and how it spread
- the effect that it had on Australian life
- who cared for the sick and why
- what part schools and hospitals played.

Tell the class that the 1918 pandemic has been forgotten by most people, but by studying it, we can get a very clear idea about how a possible future pandemic might affect Australia.

Human Flu Fact Sheet: ADDITIONAL IDEAS & ACTIVITIES

@ Download from the Teachers' Toolkit website (Lesson Plans)

@ www.teacherstoolkit.net.au