



HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER

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July 2006

Disaster Planning Tips for Caregivers of People with Disabilities Diana Converse, Family Life Faculty

News that a hurricane or tornado is on its way can cause anyone to worry. But if you are responsible for providing care for someone who is disabled, chances are you face additional concerns. You and the person you care for may not be able to "jump and run" when the tornado sirens are sounded or the hurricane warning is issued. Planning ahead will give you a little peace of mind.

For caregivers, as for everyone else, it is important to have basic supplies available. The supply list available at the American Red Cross website serves as the model for many basic supply lists. Visit: <http://www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/fds-all.pdf>. Other sources provide information about special supplies for people with disabilities, for example *Disaster Planning Tips for Senior Adults* lists supplies that might be needed by people with disabilities and can be accessed online at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY620>.



The purpose of this article is to recommend specific strategies for you as the caregiver so you will be prepared for any natural disaster that may come your way.

Have a Plan. Although planning for a disaster can be frightening, having a plan in place can help you and the person you care for feel more secure.

Create a Disaster Team. Caregivers often feel they are "on their own" during normal times, and this feeling may intensify during times of disaster

when people are hurrying to take care of their own family and property. People will be more than glad to help, but they will need to know exactly what you need and when you need it.

- Make plans for help with family, friends, and neighbors.
• Include someone on your team who is able to lift and carry heavy objects such as wheelchairs or other medical equipment.
• Give at least one other person a key to your home. Each team member should have the contact information for the others.
• Name a substitute caregiver in case you are unavailable or unable to provide care.

Make Evacuation Plans. Evacuation can be complicated for caregivers. Develop an evacuation strategy with your "disaster team." Consider the following:

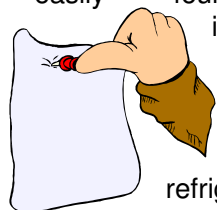
- Where are the nearest special needs emergency shelters? Remember you may not be able to reach the closest shelter, so know where the next closest one is located. Practice driving to both using different routes prior to storm warnings.
• What supplies must you take with you? In addition to the supplies you would normally need for an evacuation, think of those things you use as a caregiver every day. Make a check list of special caregiving items such as incontinence

items, cleaning and sanitizing supplies, pill splitter or crusher, and thermometer. Secure a box or case to carry them in.

- How many people are needed to help make the move? The people should be part of your disaster team. Know how to reach them.
- Whom should you inform that you are evacuating? Let your neighbors and family members know, and if you live in any kind of “complex” let the administrators know that you have left.
- Keep your vehicle’s gas tank over ¾ full at all times.

**Put It in Writing.** Remember, in a disaster you may become separated from the person you provide care for. In case this happens, provide a written, detailed description of what the care receiver will need (e.g., extra clothing and personal hygiene and/or incontinence products as well as medications). Provide very specific information about the person’s care, including tips for helping them to calm themselves in times of stress and excitement.

Give copies of the list to the members of your caregiving team and place a copy where it can be easily found. Many people put this kind of



information on a **boldly written note securely taped to the front of the refrigerator.** Emergency personnel know to look there and chances are good that the refrigerator will stay in place.

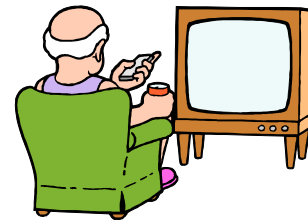
In addition, create an hour by hour description of a typical 24 hour day, include:

- How the care receiver spends his or her time.
- What is needed at each point in time.
- How to provide for those needs.
- Where the supplies are to meet those needs.

If there are caregiving tasks that occur every other day, or on a weekly basis, create a weekly calendar to describe those care needs.

**Waiting for the Storm.** When a hurricane is approaching there is time to get ready, and plenty of time to worry. When caring for someone with a disability who depends on a strict routine to help remain calm, it is important to maintain as much of your daily routine as possible:

- Keep normal sleeping and meal schedules.
- Minimize talk about the status of the hurricane.
- If you are unable to go out as normal, create activities at home to pass the time.
- Limit watching the news and weather forecasts to a specific time of day rather than keeping the television or radio turned on all day long.



**Further Assistance.** If you have questions about how to create your own disaster plan contact the local Red Cross office or the person who handles emergency management in your community. They can help you find local services and provide you with the details you need to complete your plan.

**Helpful Websites.** For more detailed information about caring for someone with a disability during a disaster see the following Web sites:

*Disaster Tips for People with Disabilities.*  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY750>

*Disaster Planning and Response for Persons with Disabilities* (State of Florida).  
[http://apd.myflorida.com/hurricane/disaster\\_preparation.htm](http://apd.myflorida.com/hurricane/disaster_preparation.htm)

*ReadyAmerica.gov.* “Get a Kit: Items for Special Needs.”  
[http://www.ready.gov/special\\_needs\\_items.html](http://www.ready.gov/special_needs_items.html)

*Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities* (Federal Emergency Management Agency) <http://www.fema.gov/library/disprep.shtm>

*American Red Cross.*  
<http://www.redcross.org>

For a copy of our new bulletin “Disaster Planning Tips for Caregivers of People with Disabilities” contact Diana at (813)744-5519 x140.

## Caregiver Health

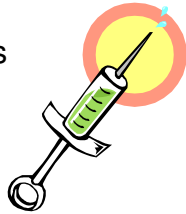
By Joe Pergola, Regional Family Life Extension Faculty

The challenges caregivers face every day often go unnoticed by much of the world. These challenges include everything from getting a loved one to doctor's appointments, to giving a bath or providing a meal. In fact, caring for a loved one can even cause caregivers to overlook their own health – including going to their own medical appointments.

A 2005 study by a Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation that works to improve access to health care, found that more than half of adults caring for a sick or disabled family member have health problems of their own.

When it comes to their health, caregivers are less likely than their peers to take steps to prevent or control chronic disease. By taking care of their own health, caregivers can be better prepared to care for their loved ones longer. Here are a few tips to help caregivers ensure that they take care of themselves:

- ❖ *Get an influenza (flu) vaccine.* The Centers for Disease Control recommend that caregivers of elders get one each year. Additionally, one pneumococcal vaccination, for most caregivers, will last a lifetime, and a tetanus booster is recommended every ten years.
- ❖ *Don't neglect your health.* Get a yearly check-up and the recommended cancer screenings (mammogram, cervical screening, etc.). Tell your doctor that you are a caregiver and let



him or her know if you feel depressed or nervous.

- ❖ *Take time each day to do something for you.* Read; listen to music; telephone friends or exercise.
- ❖ *Eat healthy foods and do not skip meals.*
- ❖ *Find caregiver resources in your area early.* You



may not need their information or services now, but will have them when you need them. Don't be afraid to ask for help. And don't do it all yourself. Use your family, friends or neighbors for support. Family may help share caregiving tasks. Friends and neighbors may help with other chores.

Caregiving can take a toll on you! Research suggests that the physical and emotional demands on caregivers put them at greater risk for health problems:

- ❖ Caregivers are more at risk for infectious diseases, such as colds and flu, and chronic diseases, such as heart problems, diabetes, and cancer.
- ❖ Depression is twice as common among caregivers compared to non-caregivers.

Source: *Elder Update* May/June 2006  
Administration on Aging within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources

# Poultry, Eggs, The Flu and You

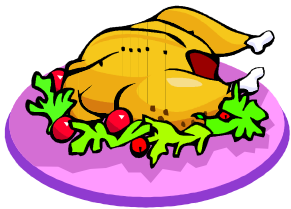
Mary A. Keith, PhD, LD, Foods, Nutrition and Health Agent

So far the health authorities know that about 190 people around the world have been infected with Avian Flu. About half of them have died. So far, none of the illnesses and none of the deaths have occurred in the United State. But no one in the field of public health thinks that it will never come here. It will, sometime.

Health authorities at the international, national, state and local levels are having meetings, laying plans, and ordering drugs that work against this virus. They're getting ready for the future. But what about today?

## Wondering about Today

For one thing, no virus, and no bird containing the virus, has been found in North America so far. It is likely that birds that migrate will carry it in eventually, but that hasn't happened yet.



The fact that most commercially raised chickens and turkeys are grown indoors is good. The less contact our poultry has with wild birds, the less likely they are to

pick up any virus.

Plus, almost every person who got sick with the avian flu has been handling, living near or raising chickens, ducks or geese. Only a very few people seem to have caught the virus from another person. That's good news, because not very many of us are raising our own chickens nowadays.

Still, some people are wondering if it's still safe to eat chicken. Others wonder if they'll have to give up the morning eggs. One person wanted to know if he could freeze the chicken long enough to kill 'the bugs' in it.

## Cooked Chicken and Eggs Are Safe

The answers are Yes, No, and No. Yes, it is still safe to eat chicken. It's safe to eat eggs too, as long as your doctor hasn't limited your cholesterol intake. So enjoy your breakfast. But no, freezing won't destroy the virus. Viruses can survive months of freezing, and still grow when they warm back up.

*The best news is that cooking will destroy the virus. If you cook chicken to 165° F, the temperature will destroy the virus. If you cook eggs until they are hard, that will kill the virus.*

## 165° F the Safe Temperature

The USDA recently announced that 165° F is a safe temperature for all sizes and parts of chicken. Now we don't have to remember that a whole turkey should get to one temperature, but a turkey breast only needs another. All the bacteria and viruses that live or are carried on raw poultry will be dead if the meat inside the thickest part gets to 165° F.

Using a lower temperature will allow you to have turkey and chicken that is moister and less tough. That doesn't mean you can just guess the temperature though. You can't tell for sure by wiggling the leg or looking at the color of the juices.

You need a meat thermometer to be sure.

Don't bother with rinsing raw poultry before you cook it. That's more likely to spread the juices around the kitchen. Just take it out of the package and cook it to kill the virus, and bacteria too. Fire up the grill tonight!



# Drywood Termites are Swarming

By Lisa Leslie, Hillsborough County Extension Agent

Drywood and subterranean termites both cause trouble for Florida homeowners. Subterranean termites need moisture and nest in the soil.

Drywood termites do not require contact with soil and can infest dry wood. Because of these differences, the methods used to rid your house of drywood termites are much



different than eradication methods for subterranean termites. The good news about drywood termites is that they multiply at a slower rate, so it takes a much longer time before they do significant damage to your house.

April through August is the peak mating season for drywood termites. This is the time of year when adult termites- called swarmers - fly out of their colonies hoping to find mates and start new colonies. The swarmers usually head toward natural or artificial light and they shed their wings. Winged termites can be distinguished from winged ants because of differences in their body, wings, and antennae. A pest control operator or the Hillsborough County Extension office can help you determine whether you have an ant or a termite.

Finding wings on window sills, seeing swarmers, and finding dead swarmers are all signs of infestation. Another sign of infestation is finding pellets smaller than a grain of rice accumulating on floors or under furniture. These pellets are cream to reddish brown or black and are not related to the color of the wood. The termites excrete these pellets through tiny “kickout” holes. An experienced pest control operator may be able to detect these holes.

If you see signs of an infestation, a thorough inspection of your home should be conducted by a licensed pest control operator. The purpose of the inspection is to determine the extent of the drywood infestation. The results of the inspection will help you choose a treatment option. Two common methods are fumigation (tenting) or localized treatment.

Tom Wisdo, an entomologist with Impact Pest Management, recommends that “Homeowners take a calm logical approach in dealing with drywood termites.” He says, “Homeowners should take their time,” and do not need to rush into a treatment plan.

If an infestation is not too extensive, localized treatment can be effective. Localized treatment involves injecting a chemical termiticide directly into termite galleries. Wisdo said an example of a termiticide labeled for injection is Termidor, a non-repellant termiticide. Termites do not detect non-repellants so they are likely to move through the chemical and then pass it on to other termites. These types of chemicals have been shown to be effective termite killers. A borate product can also be used to prevent the spread of the colony. Borates in spray or foam form can be injected into naked wood.

Fumigation (tenting) is necessary if your termite infestation is extensive.

Fumigation involves sealing up the house with a tent and pumping in a gas.



In order for tenting to be effective: 1)the tent must form a tight seal around your house and 2)the correct volume of gas must be pumped into the house. If either of these conditions is not accomplished, you will probably not kill the colony. Successful fumigation should completely eradicate all drywood termite colonies in your home. Unfortunately, fumigation is the most inconvenient method because it involves moving out of your house for two days.

Remember, don't panic. The Florida Department of Agriculture recommends that a consumer's get an inspection, a treatment proposal, and cost estimates from two or more licensed companies.

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**July 2006**  
**Family & Consumer Sciences**

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