

Disaster Preparations

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News reports have been filled with the predictions of the Avian Flu pandemic. This follows our recent memories of devastating hurricanes and other natural disasters. We are being told to expect the disruption of services we depend upon, such as water, electricity, the availability of food and health care. With these warnings comes the message that each of us can be more prepared. Our planning should start now.

Several web sites link to PandemicFlu.gov or the Center for Disease Control's site at www.cdc.gov. These sites give examples of food, non perishables, medical, health and emergency supplies to have on hand for an extended time (2-4 weeks) while we may need to stay at home. Unfortunately, "pet food" is all that is listed for our dogs. Below is a list to consider for your preparations.

- Establish the amount of food and water your dog(s) consumes on a daily basis and store enough to last a month. Be sure to include dog treats.
- If your dog is on medication on a continuing basis, ask your Vet for an extra month's supply.
- Ask your Vet to suggest and /or provide first aid supplies to have on hand, such as antibacterial ointment, anti-diarrheal medication, antihistamines, anti-gas medications, Vet wrap etc. Some of these supplies are available over the counter and you may stock them or take them to dog shows already.
- Have your dog permanently identified. We will have a microchip clinic at the Specialty.
- In a plastic, waterproof bag, keep a copy of your dog's registration papers, dog license, rabies certificate, inoculation record, medical history and a photo of your dog and personal contact information. Have this in an available place at all times.
- In your wallet keep a photo of your dog, the contact information for the microchip company and local dog shelters where your dog may be taken, should you be separated.
- Back up all computer files on a CD to take with you in case of evacuation.
- Have a note or sign prominently posted at each entrance of your house indicating how many pets may be inside.

Disaster planning can bring added safety, self sufficiency and peace of mind. Be prepared.