



# Copper Can Help Contain Flu

Copper is known for many things including durability, aesthetic beauty and recycling potential, but one day it may become as widely known for keeping humans safe from “bird flu” and other influenza viruses.

Recent research by the University of Southampton, UK, shows that copper can virtually eliminate the Influenza A virus within six hours of exposure. This is an especially important finding because a member of this virus family is the virulent Avian Flu strain that has already caused many deaths and has the potential to grow into a worldwide epidemic.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Influenza A viruses result in over 36,000 deaths and 200,000 hospitalizations each year in the United States alone.

The Southampton findings are based on a series of experiments where researchers placed two million units of H1N1 Influenza A virus on samples of pure copper (C11000) and on stainless steel (S30400) at room temperature. After six hours, the stainless steel surfaces showed only a 50 percent reduction of the pathogens, while virtually all — 99.99 percent — were eliminated on the copper surface.

Because the Avian Flu strain is very similar to the H1N1 strain, the researchers believe copper’s antimicrobial properties would be similarly effective against it. If an outbreak occurs, using copper alloys such as brass and bronze for common touch surfaces like doorknobs and handles may reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

The study, which is expected to conclude later this year, is part of a wide-scale effort by CDA to measure the effectiveness of various copper alloys against pathogens through independent laboratory testing. **Cu**