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## Rationing of bird flu drugs

ONLY one in every 20 Australians will get drugs to protect against bird flu because of a world shortage — and scientists want the medicines made here.

Experts at the Australian National University claim it could take six months to produce a vaccine if a pandemic strikes.

In that time the two antiviral drugs Tamiflu and Relenza will be the only way to fight the virus.

The Federal Government has 3.9 million doses of Tamiflu but that will only be enough for one million essential service workers for six weeks.

In an article published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* ANU experts Buddhima Lokuge, Peter Drahos and Warwick Neville say the solution is to produce the drugs here.

They want the Government to ask international drug companies Roche and Glaxco-Smith-Kline to set up local production — and if they refuse, the Government should override the patent.

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