

Evening News

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## Acambis set to speed up trials of bird flu vaccine

ACAMBIS, the listed drugs group, hopes to start human trials of its pandemic influenza vaccine, which could be used to target bird flu, as soon as possible.

The firm said it was planning to begin clinical studies within the next 18 months, but would try and bring that date forward and work with regulators to potentially speed up the trials process.

Chief executive Gordon Cameron said: "Your traditional path would be several years of clinical trials before you can get [the vaccine] to market. But there may be shortcuts that the regulatory authorities may allow."

Acambis is best known for supplying smallpox vaccine to the United States government, which built up stocks of the medicine even though it has still not been approved by regulators. The firm also posted a wider third-quarter loss of £10.3 million.

Bird flu has killed more than 60 people in Asia, and experts fear it could mutate to be passed from human to human.

Acambis' pandemic influenza vaccine will target all forms of the A strain flu virus, which has been responsible for all pandemic outbreaks in the last century.

"We would have the same vaccine, made year after year, " noted Mr Cameron.

### Web links

- [Dept of Health - pandemic flu](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en)  
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en>
- [WHO - Bird Flu fact sheet](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_01_15/en/)  
[http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004\\_01\\_15/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_01_15/en/)

### Related topic

- [Bird flu](http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=161)  
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