

Protect Yourself and Others from the Flu

What is the bird flu?

Avian or bird flu is caused by the avian influenza virus. The current strain of the virus causing disease is H5N1 and is moving through Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The virus can make birds like chickens, ducks and turkeys very sick and even kill them. There are no known cases of bird flu in the United States.

Could I become infected?

The virus can spread to humans who come in contact with infected birds. There is a chance that the virus may change into a type that can spread from humans to humans.

How does the flu spread?

Birds carry the virus in their intestines. The virus comes out through bodily fluids such as saliva, nasal secretions and feces. Other birds get sick when they come in contact with these fluids. Humans can get sick through contact with infected poultry or these contaminated fluids.



What are the symptoms?

Range from fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches to eye infections, pneumonia, problems breathing, viral pneumonia and other severe and life threatening issues.



How is the bird flu treated?

Antiviral agents such as Tamiflu may protect against avian influenza. Right now there is no vaccine for this flu. People who get sick will need to go to the hospital for supportive care.

What are the current concerns?

Person-to-person infections will be caused by a new strain of the H5N1 virus, and humans will not be immune to it. The virus has the potential to cause serious disease and even death in humans. Making a new vaccine that will protect against this flu may take several months and large populations may become infected.

The virus circulating in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East cannot now easily spread from person-to-person. It's difficult to predict if - or when - that might happen, or if it will result in widespread infections. The people who have become sick with the bird flu in those areas of the world have been in direct contact with sick birds.

How can I prevent the flu?

The best thing you can do is to avoid getting the bird flu or any other type of flu in the first place. You can do this by washing your hands regularly with soap, covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze, and not touching your face with unwashed hands. Make sure your children wash their hands frequently. If you or your children are sick, stay home so that other people don't get sick.



What other things can I do?

General precautions should always be taken when handling any raw meat, including raw eggs, to avoid possibly spreading germs. These measures include:

- Washing hands and surfaces before and after food preparation.
- Avoiding using the same utensils on raw meat as on other foods, even cooked meat.
- Cooking raw meat thoroughly.

Remember

It is safe to eat poultry (chicken, turkey, duck) that has been completely cooked.

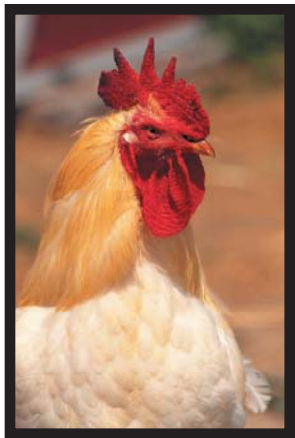
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The following web sites have the most current information on the bird flu.

Michigan Department of
Community Health
www.michigan.gov/mdch

U.S. Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

World Health Organization
www.who.org



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Department of
Public Health**

33030 Van Born
Wayne, MI 48184

734-727-7000

**After-Hours Emergencies
734-727-7284**

www.waynecounty.com



**Your Guide
to
Bird Flu**

**Preparation
and
Prevention**

Loretta V. Davis, MSA
Public Health Officer



**Robert A. Ficano
County Executive**