

BIRD FLU



Avian Influenza, also known as bird flu, has been in the news a lot lately. What is it?

Bird flu is a subtype of influenza A virus that occurs mainly in birds and has been around for many years. Since 2003 'bird flu' has been found in more and more birds (mainly in Asia) and is highly deadly, particularly to poultry. The first human case was diagnosed in 1997. Since then, very few people have contracted Avian Influenza (AI).

This virus has spread very quickly to bird species other than poultry, and has the potential to spread worldwide because of the migratory habits of birds. Websites of the World Health Organization, (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, included in the references on the reverse side, are excellent and informative.

THE YEARLY, ROUTINE FLU SHOT DOES NOT GIVE YOU IMMUNITY TO BIRD FLU!!!

Precautions to take *if* you are in an area affected by bird flu

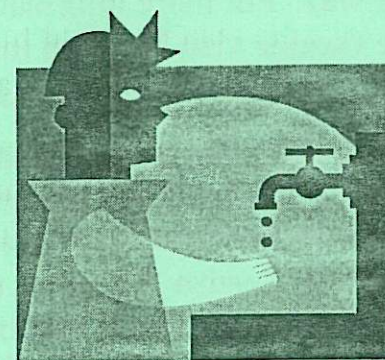
- Avoid contact with chickens, ducks or other poultry and their waste.
- Children are at higher risk; teach them to avoid contact with birds.
- Do not keep birds as pets.
- Wash hands with soap and water after any contact.
- Do not transport birds, even if you think they are healthy.
- Do not prepare poultry from affected areas.
- If you unintentionally come into contact with poultry in an affected area:
 - . Wash your hands immediately with soap and water.
 - . Remove shoes outside the house and clean them well.
 - . Check your temperature at least daily for 7 days.
 - . Call you health care provider if your temperature is above 37.5C or 99.5F.

TO DATE THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE IS NOT AN AREA AFFECTED BY BIRD FLU, AS FAR AS IS KNOWN BY HHS, CDC, OR WHO.

PLAN AHEAD AND PROTECT YOURSELF

The basic flu preventive measures remain the same.

- **Wash your hands frequently.**
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat a well-balanced, healthy diet.
- If you are sick, stay home. Use a thermometer to take your temperature, and call it in to your health care provider.
- Get plenty of rest.



24 October 2005
Office of Medical Services
US Department of State