

What is Avian Flu?

Avian Flu, also called bird flu, is a contagious respiratory disease that can infect humans as well as birds. It is caused by a flu-like virus. Avian Flu virus does not usually infect humans but a number of cases of human Avian Flu have occurred since 1997. As of February 2006, there are no cases of Avian Flu in the U.S.

Chickens, ducks, geese and other wild water birds are especially at risk to get the disease. Avian flu can be deadly to both birds and humans.

What are the symptoms of Avian Flu in humans?

They are similar to those of the seasonal flu.

- Fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches
 - Severe respiratory illness like pneumonia
- Some persons may show other symptoms like diarrhea, coma, encephalitis, and eye infections.

How is human Avian Flu spread?

Humans can get Avian Flu from contact with infected birds, contaminated surfaces, or standing pond water. Infected birds shed the virus in saliva and droppings. A person can catch the Avian Flu virus when an infected chicken coughs or sneezes onto the person's face, or by breathing in bird dropping particles.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is still looking into whether Avian Flu spreads from person to person. The virus is not spread by eating cooked meat or eggs so there is no danger in eating cooked chicken, duck or other poultry.

What drugs are available for Avian Flu?

The effectiveness of antiviral drugs is unknown.

Is there a vaccine against human Avian Flu?

No. However, health care providers may give regular flu vaccine to high-risk groups such as poultry workers, to lessen the risk that they may become infected with both the human and bird flu viruses at the same time.

Why worry about getting both human and bird flu viruses at the same time?

The mixing of human and Avian Flu viruses could produce a new type of flu to which humans have no defenses. It is

possible that the new type would be easily passed from person to person, which could cause worldwide outbreak (pandemic) and even death.

If Avian Flu is identified in the U.S., these are things you can do to protect yourself:

1. Always wash your hands after outdoor activities, such as after playing with standing water, after picnicking .
2. Always cover your cough.
3. Avoid ill people.
4. Stay home when ill.
5. Avoid contact with wild birds, especially water birds.
6. Do not enter bird cages & chicken pens.

Bird Illness

How do chickens or other birds get Avian Flu?

- From direct contact with the saliva or droppings of infected birds
- From contaminated feed, water, cages, equipment or clothing, like shoes of poultry workers.

Indoor birds are safe from Avian Flu.

What are the symptoms of Avian Flu in birds?

- Lack of appetite and energy
- Swollen head, eyelids, comb, wattle and legs
- Purple wattle and comb
- Nasal discharge
- Sneezing and coughing
- Diarrhea
- Sudden death

Things you can do to protect your bird from Avian Flu:

1. Do not mix birds of unknown origin with existing pet birds.
2. Keep your birds in cages, hen houses, or in a netted area to keep wild birds away.
3. Clean and disinfect your bird cage or hen house as necessary.

Visit our website at: <http://www.ccpublichealth.org> for more information about Avian Flu or call the Health Emergency Information Line at (925) 959-9911 or the Contra Costa Public Health at (925) 313-6740.

Visit the WHO website at: <http://www.who.int/en/> to see up-to-date information on countries that have been affected by Avian Flu,