



Bird Flu Facts

For More Information:

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC&P) Toll-Free:
 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
 1-888-232-6348 TTY
 E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov

You can also visit the following Web sites for the latest travel advisories and updated information on avian influenza:

Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS):
<http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/flu/zooflu.shtml>

CDC&P:
www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm

World Health Organization (WHO):
www.who.int/foodsafety/micro/avian/en/

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA):
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/birdbiosecurity/>

To obtain a copy of this document in an alternate format, call:
 (971) 673-1222
 TTY: (971) 673-0372

Introduction

- There are many different kinds of bird flu. Some types of bird flu are mild, but others make both wild and tame birds very sick.
- When birds that people raise, such as chickens, turkeys or ducks, catch the bird flu they become very sick and many die.
- Right now there is a very deadly type of bird flu making birds sick in many parts of the world, including Asia, Africa and Europe. Since 1997 millions of birds have died or been killed to prevent the spread of this sickness to birds around the world.
- Some types of bird flu can make people sick. At this time, human sickness with this deadly type of bird flu has not been common. Depending upon the type of bird flu, people can get mildly sick or get very sick and die.
- Since December 2003 more than 180 people have become sick and more than 100 have died. All of the people who have gotten sick have had close contact with sick birds.
- This type of bird flu is not yet in North America, but it is expected that wild birds could bring it here in late summer or early fall.

Risks to People

- The people who have become sick with the deadly bird flu have been in close contact with sick birds.
- The bird flu is not believed to spread from person to person, but some scientists fear it could change into a deadly new type that spreads easily from one person to another.
- This could cause a worldwide flu outbreak among people, which is called a "pandemic."
- The current risk to Americans from the deadly bird flu outbreak in other parts of the world is low. This type of bird flu has not been found in the United States and there have been no human cases of this type of bird flu in the United States. However, it is possible that people who travel to countries where there is bird flu could get sick if they come into close contact with sick birds.
- If you raise birds, be careful to watch for signs of sickness in your birds. Keep things clean and don't allow people to come into contact with your birds.
- If your birds get sick, call USDA's Veterinary Services toll-free at 1-866-536-7593 to find out why.

Symptoms

- The symptoms of bird flu in people range from typical flu-like symptoms (such as fever, cough, sore throat and muscles), to eye infections, difficulty breathing, diarrhea, brain disease and other serious and life-threatening problems.

Controlling the Spread of Disease

- The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) currently advises travelers to countries with known outbreaks of bird flu to avoid bird farms and markets where live birds are raised or kept. Avoid touching bird droppings and wash your hands often.
- Use waterless alcohol-based hand gels when soap and water are not available and when hands do not look dirty.
- When planning an overseas trip, check the CDC Web site or call their public information hotline at 1-888-246-2675 for the latest travel advice.
- Bird flu germs are destroyed by heat. Thoroughly cook all foods, including birds, eggs and bird blood.
- After you return from travel, watch your own health for 10 days.
- If you become sick with fever and develop a cough or difficulty breathing during this 10-day period, be sure to tell your healthcare provider about your travel and whether you visited bird farms or came into close contact with someone who had been diagnosed with bird flu, or with animals in live bird markets, or with any droppings from birds or other animals.
- If you are not feeling well, wash your hands frequently and cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Avoid touching or kissing friends and family members, avoid public gatherings, and stay a safe distance (more than three feet) away from other people to avoid spreading your sickness.
- The spread of bird flu is not limited to any one area of the world, or group of people. Anyone can get the bird flu.

Treatment

- Supportive care is the treatment for bird flu in people.
- Drugs called “antivirals” can help people keep from getting as sick for as long as they normally would with the flu, but these may not be available.
- There currently is no flu shot to protect people against the bird flu. However, drug companies are working to make a flu shot for bird flu in people.