

Avian Influenza or Bird Flu:

A disease of birds caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild migratory birds. These viruses can infect domestic poultry such as chickens and turkeys. The bird flu can range from a mild, undetectable form to severe illness resulting in many bird deaths.

Highly Pathogenic (HP) Avian Influenza:

Avian flu viruses are classified based upon the severity of the illness they cause in birds. Highly pathogenic forms of the virus can spread rapidly and are often fatal to birds. These forms of avian influenza virus do not commonly cross over into humans, although it can happen when people are in close contact with infected birds.

H5N1:

A specific strain of avian influenza that has become highly pathogenic. It was first identified in the 1900s. Since then, it has reappeared in various parts of the world, including Asia, Europe and Africa. It is very lethal to birds, and has occasionally crossed over to humans who have had close contact with infected birds.

H5N1-HP Asia/Euro strain:

The strain of highly pathogenic H5N1 that has spread out of Asia and into Europe is changing and taking on characteristics. Research suggests that the current strain of H5N1-HP virus is becoming more capable of causing disease in animals than the earlier H5N1-HP viruses.

Immunity:

A natural or acquired resistance to a specific disease.

Low Pathogenic (LP) Avian Influenza:

Most avian influenza viruses are classified as low pathogenic forms of the virus, meaning they cause little or no symptoms in infected birds. Low pathogen influenza viruses pose no serious health risk to humans.

Mutate:

Any alteration or change. In a virus, this change may result in a virus that is disease-causing or one that has little or no effect. Specific mutations in influenza viruses cannot be predicted, making it difficult if not impossible to know if or when a virus such as H5N1 might acquire the properties needed to spread easily among humans.

Outbreak:

The occurrence of more cases of a disease than would normally be expected in a specific place or among a group, over a given period of time.

Pandemic and Influenza Pandemic:

A pandemic is the worldwide outbreak of any disease in numbers clearly in excess of normal. An influenza pandemic can start when three conditions have been met: a new influenza virus strain emerges; it infects humans, causing serious illness; and it spreads easily among humans. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person. Currently, there is no pandemic influenza.

Pathogenic:

Causing disease or the ability to cause disease.

Seasonal or Common Flu:

This is a human respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity, and a vaccine is available.

Virus:

A virus is a simple, submicroscopic particle that invades other living cells and can often cause disease. Because it can only replicate inside another cell, it is considered a parasite and is not typically regarded as a living organism.

Contacts

By Email: _____

U.S. Government Information about Pandemics:

www.pandemicflu.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

www.cdc.gov/flu

U.S. Department of Agriculture:

<http://www.usda.gov>

Partnership for Food Safety Education:

<http://www.fightbac.org>

World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int>

FMI:

<http://www.fmi.org>

A Consumer Guide to Food Quality and Safe Handling:

<http://www.fmi.org/consumer/foodguides.pdf>

These guides offer consumers helpful and practical information on handling, storage, preparation, cooking tips, and food safety for dairy products & eggs; deli & fresh prepared foods; meat & poultry; fresh fruits & vegetables; seafood; ground meat & ground poultry.

The National Chicken Council:

<http://www.nationalchickencouncil.com>

National Turkey Federation:

<http://www.eatturkey.com>

United Egg Producers:

<http://www.unitedegg.org>

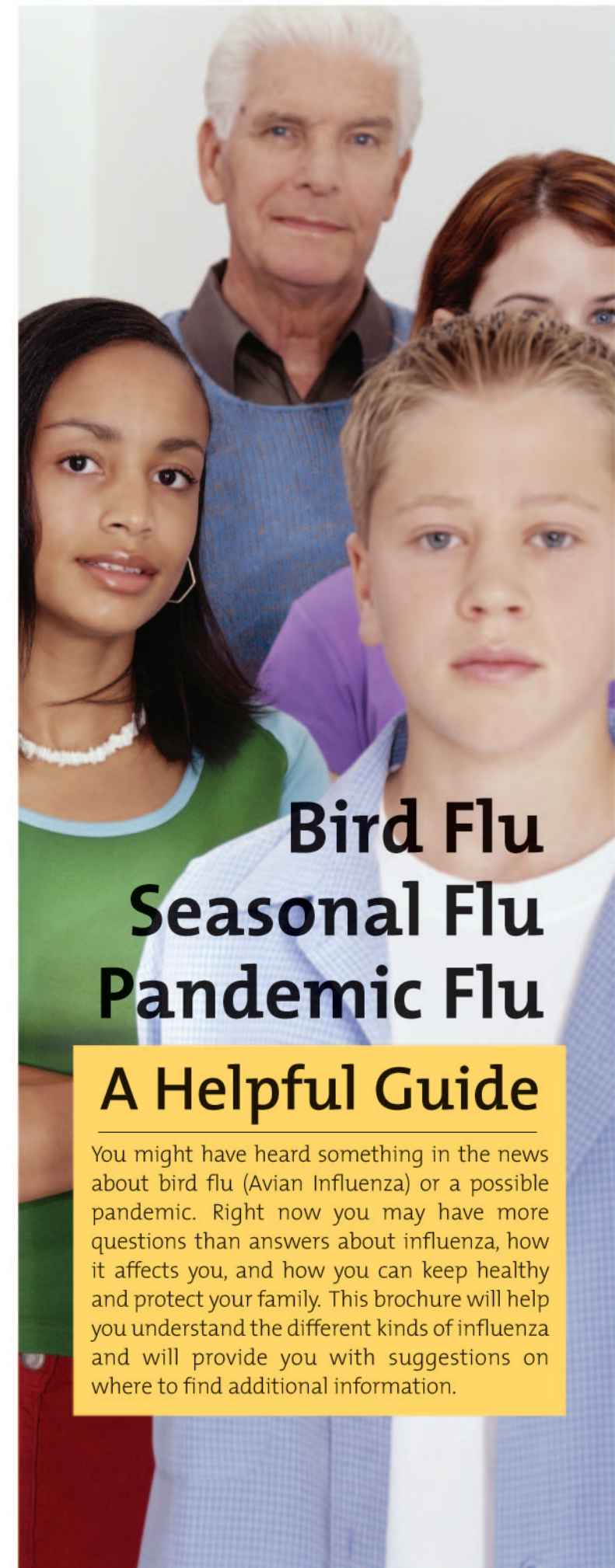
By Phone: _____

1-800-CDC-INFO • (1-800-232-4636) • (1-888-232-6348 for TTY)

*Find out the number for your State or Local Health Department



655 15th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
202.452.8444



Bird Flu Seasonal Flu Pandemic Flu

A Helpful Guide

You might have heard something in the news about bird flu (Avian Influenza) or a possible pandemic. Right now you may have more questions than answers about influenza, how it affects you, and how you can keep healthy and protect your family. This brochure will help you understand the different kinds of influenza and will provide you with suggestions on where to find additional information.

Glossary

Seasonal Influenza or Common Flu

Influenza, commonly called the flu, is caused by a virus. Every year there is a flu season, usually in the fall and winter. You may have had the flu, or know someone who has had it.

What is it?

The flu is a respiratory disease. Symptoms include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough and muscle aches.

Who can get the flu?

Anyone can get the flu. In healthy adults it usually doesn't cause serious illness. For the very young, the elderly and those who are already sick, the flu may cause complications and result in more serious illness. One of the most common complications is pneumonia. Every year there are deaths in the U.S. as a result of flu complications.

How do people get the flu?

The flu virus can be spread through the air when a sick person coughs or sneezes. Then the microscopic (invisible) virus particles can be inhaled through the nose or mouth of another person. The virus particles may also fall onto a surface where they can be picked up on someone's hands and transferred to their nose or mouth by touching. (See the section "Staying Healthy & Avoiding the Flu" to learn how you can lessen your chances of getting the flu.)

Can the flu be prevented?

Flu vaccinations are offered every year – and you should get one. This vaccine helps prevent seasonal flu. Common sense precautions such as washing your hands and sneezing into a tissue will help prevent the spread of the flu.

Can people get the flu from eating poultry or eggs?

No, the viruses that typically cause seasonal flu are not in our food.

Is seasonal flu the same thing as a pandemic?

No. Seasonal flu occurs every year, and there are vaccines available to help protect us from these flu viruses. A pandemic is quite different – see the section on "Pandemic Flu" to understand how these are different.

*Please see Glossary for definitions.

Avian Influenza or Bird Flu

Birds, like people, have a flu season and can get the flu. The viruses that cause bird flu are not the same as the viruses that cause the flu in people.

What is it?

Avian influenza, commonly called bird flu, is a bird disease caused by a virus. It is usually a mild disease. Poultry are routinely tested for avian influenza in an effort to quickly diagnose the disease and prevent its spread.

Who can get the virus?

The virus can occur naturally in some wild migratory water birds, such as ducks and geese, which do not get sick from the virus but can carry it to other birds. Domestic poultry such as chickens and turkeys can get bird flu. These bird flu viruses pose no serious threat to human health.

Are there more serious forms of bird flu?

Yes, there are certain types of bird flu viruses that can cause a very serious disease in birds. These are called highly pathogenic or HP forms of the virus. These viruses are often fatal to birds and can spread rapidly. They are a serious threat to the health of poultry.

Are these serious forms of the virus common?

There have only been three highly pathogenic (HP) avian influenza outbreaks in the U.S. – in 1924, 1983 and 2004. Each time the outbreak was quickly detected, contained and eradicated. However, there is an HP form of the virus called H5N1 that has become a serious concern. H5N1 is rapidly spreading from Asia to Europe and Africa, and usual methods for eliminating the spread of bird flu are not working.

Can people get the flu from HP forms of the virus?

Although bird flu viruses do not usually infect people, the H5N1 form has caused illness in some people who have had close and direct contact with diseased birds. The spread of the disease from one person to another has been very rare, and has never gone beyond one person.

Will we get the H5N1 bird virus in this country?

Because this virus can be spread by wild migratory birds, it is very possible that poultry in the U.S. will get the H5N1 virus. A finding of H5N1 in birds is NOT a pandemic. The H5N1 virus does not easily spread from birds to humans.

Can people get H5N1 from eating poultry or eggs?

People cannot get bird flu from eating properly handled and cooked food. (See "Food Safety Tips.")

Pandemic Flu

Pandemic is the term used for any disease that rapidly spreads around the world, affecting large numbers of people and for which there is no natural immunity or immediately available treatment or prevention.

What is it?

Pandemic influenza (pandemic flu) is a worldwide outbreak of flu caused by a new flu virus that people have not been exposed to before. Because our bodies would have no resistance to this new virus, it could spread quickly from person to person and cause serious illness.

What causes it?

Flu viruses have the ability to change or mutate, and any flu virus can mutate into a new form. Scientists are concerned that the H5N1 bird flu virus could mutate into a new form that easily infects people, spreads rapidly from person to person and causes serious illness. If this happens, we will not have a vaccine for this new virus and a pandemic could result.

How is pandemic flu different from seasonal flu?

The symptoms of pandemic flu are similar to those of seasonal flu, only they are usually more severe and can lead to more serious complications. Even young, healthy adults can get pandemic flu, and no one is immune. Seasonal flu is predictable and can be controlled. Pandemic flu cannot be predicted and it is very difficult to control.

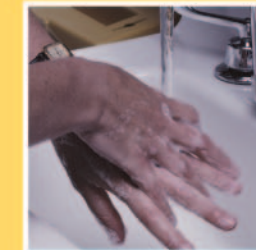
Will there be a flu pandemic?

No one can predict when, or if, a flu pandemic might occur. Previous influenza pandemics (such as the ones in 1918, 1957 and 1968) resulted in large numbers of illness and death. Many government organizations and businesses are developing plans for coping with a pandemic since preparedness is the best strategy. You should also be prepared. (See "Contacts" for more information.)



Staying Healthy & Avoiding the Flu

Here are some practical tips for staying healthy that you should follow every day, and they are especially important during flu season or if there is a pandemic.



Wash your hands frequently.

Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers when soap and water are not available.



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and dispose of the tissue in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.



Get a flu shot. This will not protect you from pandemic flu, but it will help protect you from other flu viruses. Talk to your doctor about getting a pneumonia shot, especially if you are over 65.



Properly handle and cook poultry and eggs. Poultry should be cooked to at least 165°F (74°C), which will destroy viruses and other bacteria should they be present. Eggs should be cooked until both the yellow and white parts are firm.

Food Safety Tips

People cannot get avian influenza from eating properly handled and cooked food.

- Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling food.
- Keep raw poultry and its juices separate from other foods.
- Wash utensils and surfaces with hot, soapy water, including countertops and cutting boards.
- Use a food thermometer to be sure poultry is cooked to an internal temperature of at least 165°F (74°C).

