

What Are the Symptoms of Bird Flu

How can you know whether your or a loved one has bird flu or just a case of ordinary flu? That's not a simple question to answer.

Frankly, the only 100% way is to have body secretions tested by a World Health Organization (WHO) laboratory such as the U.S. Center for Disease Control in Atlanta Georgia. There are also such laboratories in Melbourne Australia and London England.

Obviously, they are not available to just any and every household and clinic with a flu patient. Right now there're probably overwhelmed with testing new and suspected cases in Southeast Asia, Europe and Africa.

If you have good reason to believe that you have been exposed to bird flu, then you should go right away to a clinic or hospital to be tested and get the care you'll need if your case becomes severe.

You have good reason to believe you have been exposed to bird flu if you live in or have travelled recently in SouthEast/South Asia, the Mid-East, Europe or Africa. Especially if you work with or around chickens or you have been around chickens. That is, to a chicken market or to a cock fight (where chicken blood and other fluids and sprayed through the air and onto the audience.) And also if you've eaten any undercooked chicken or eggs from those areas.

If you are in those areas and feeling very sick, get medical attention immediately even if you have not been exposed to chickens. You never know -- when bird flu becomes highly contagious, somebody is going to be the first victim to have no exposure to chickens. I hope it's not you, but I don't know that.

Right now, those of us who live in North or South America have no direct exposure to bird flu. But of course that will eventually change. And it's possible somebody could catch it from a migrating duck.

For example, near my apartment there's a small municipal park with a nice pond stocked with fish . . . and ducks love it! In nice weather hundreds of people especially children are exposed to ducks and their manure.

The difficult thing is that bird flu is, first of all, influenza. It infects the cells lining your respiratory tract and therefore causes symptoms that are much the same as ordinary flu:

- Fatigue
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Muscle pain
- High fever
- Sore throat
- Conjunctivitis -- pink eye

Bird flu can also cause:

- Stomach ache
- Vomiting - including blood
- Severe headaches
- Bone aches
- Severe fatigue lasting longer than ordinary flu
- Stuffy nose
- Dizziness
- Diarrhea

During the first one or two days, bird flu will look exactly like ordinary flu.

The big difference -- and danger -- from its development. Bird flu tends to cause much more severe breathing problems than ordinary flu, plus triggers a much more severe counteraction by your body's immune system.

This can result in a fever that's high enough to be dangerous in itself.

If you or your loved one develops a high fever and/or difficulty breathing, definitely see a doctor as soon as possible. Or any of the other symptoms associated with just bird flu. Whether you've got bird flu or not, you need professional medical care.

Last November 2005, a biotech company in Singapore named Rockeby announced that they'd come up with a quick test for bird flu.

According to WHO, their test is not proven yet. You can get more information on it from searching Google for Rockeby.

WHO has said they are working on a standard test for bird flu, but that has not come out yet. Until it does, they say the only recognized tests for bird flu must be done by their laboratories.

And of course, my final piece of advice should be obvious.

When there's an all-out pandemic of contagious bird flu anywhere in the world and you start feeling sick with the flu -- assume it is bird flu.

Treat yourself or your loved one accordingly. Get professional medical care.

Even if bird flu has not been reported in your country or your area, assume you've got it. A pandemic of contagious bird flu will make people ill in new areas before you hear about them on the news.

Besides, while ordinary flu is not dangerous for ordinary adults, it still kills 30-50,000 Americans every year and tens of thousands more people around the world -- so it's still a serious disease.

Whether you have bird flu or ordinary flu, treat yourself well, get proper medical care -- and do not attempt to go to work or anyplace besides a doctor.

Whatever virus you've got, do us all a favor and don't spread it around.

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About the Author

© 2006 by Richard Stoker Richard discusses how to avoid bird flu in his book How to Protect Yourself and Your Family From Bird Flu -- <http://www.Bird-Flu-Protection-Home.com> And check out his blog at: <http://BirdFlu-Symptoms.blogspot.com>