

## Bird Flu Facts Can Save Lives

Doctors and scientists around the world fear it may well become the next pandemic. People have died and many are concerned it's just a matter of time before the crafty bird flu manages to spread not only from bird to human but also from human to human.

The scare level is high as scientists race to create a vaccine and reports of deaths slowly rack up. But what is the bird flu and what can be done to prevent its spread, and more importantly, protect people?

The bird flu is a strain of influenza occurs naturally in birds. Much like humans, wild birds all over the world carry viruses in their intestines, but generally don't become sick from them. Avian influenza, however, is different and can make some birds, including chickens, ducks and turkeys quite sick and can even result in death.

While most bird viruses don't effect humans, the latest strains have been creating problems in the human world, thus the concerns. Since 1997 there have been 100 confirmed cases of human infection with bird flu viruses.

People can become infected with bird flu through close contact with infected birds and most especially their excretions and secretions. Although the spread of the illness from one person to the next has been reported only rarely, and even then not beyond one additional person, there are many concerns in the scientific and medical communities that this will not continue. Viruses such as the flu are well known for their abilities to mutate and there's no reason to believe that won't be the case with this quite deadly strain of flu.

Avian flu symptoms in humans are very much like those of run-of-the-mill flu - with a wide variety found. These can include cough, sore throat, fever, eye infections, respiratory issues and other life-threatening complications.

While it's believed the medications that can help ease the symptoms of human flu viruses might help in the case of the avian flu, there are concerns the bird virus will become resistant to these drugs, creating a bigger issue. At this time there is no vaccine for the bird flu either.

At this point, it is not believed a person can become infected with the bird flu by eating poultry or eggs. As long as safe cooking practices are followed, there should be little concern. To avoid exposure, make sure chicken and eggs are properly cooked and take care to clean up well following preparation. Washing hands and kitchen surfaces is an absolute must. Sanitary practices are a must in avoiding the bird flu and lots of other viruses and bacterial conditions as well.

Will the avian flu become the next pandemic, striking and perhaps killing thousands and thousands the world over?

Unfortunately, only time will tell. The potential, scientists fear, is absolutely there. The only way at this point for people to protect themselves is to use common sense when handling birds - either domestic or wild. Don't eat, drink or smoke while handling birds, live or dead. Wash hands thoroughly and use caution while cooking.

As it is with so many other illnesses, the simple act of hand washing frequently and correctly can go a long way toward minimizing exposure.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

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