Bird Flu and You
Get the Facts!

Many birds around the world are getting sick and dying from a severe form of bird flu called “Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1.” Sometimes it is referred to as HPAI H5N1. This form of bird flu has not been found in the United States. But it may come to this country sometime in the future.

If it does arrive here, you should know:

Bird flu is not the same thing as “pandemic flu.”
• Pandemic flu would make lots of people sick all over the world.
• It would spread easily from one person to another.
• Bird flu does not do that.
• Bird flu would have to change form to become pandemic flu. We don’t know if this will ever happen.

Bird flu is hard for people to catch.
• Most people who became sick with bird flu came into contact with sick or dead chickens or ducks and touched them with bare hands.
  • You could also get bird flu by touching things that had droppings from sick or dead birds on them.
• Thoroughly cooking meat kills the bird flu virus.

Even though the severe form of bird flu isn't here right now, you should never touch wild birds with your BARE HANDS.
• Birds can carry many kinds of germs that can make us sick.
• A bird could look fine and still be sick.
• If you MUST handle a sick or dead bird, wear gloves and wash your hands afterwards.

To learn more about bird flu, visit www.nyhealth.gov

H5N1 Avian Influenza