

## Common Flu vs. Avian Flu (Bird Flu)

Frequently Asked Questions:	Avian Flu (Bird Flu)	The Common Flu
What is it?	This is an infection caused by bird flu viruses which occurs naturally among birds worldwide; makes some domesticated birds very sick and may kill them.	This is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Every year in the U.S., about 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu, and about 36,000 people die.
When was it discovered?	In Southeast Asia in 1997 when the virus jumped from birds to humans. It has remained mainly in S.E. Asia but is spreading.	Flu outbreaks have occurred throughout the centuries with three worldwide outbreaks (pandemics) in the last century alone.
What is the concern?	That this form of flu will change making it able to spread from person to person causing a flu pandemic with high numbers of deaths.	The common flu can also mutate into a more severe form causing a flu pandemic leading to a high mortality rate.
Who is at risk?	Bird flu viruses do not usually infect humans, but several human cases have occurred in people working closely with infected poultry.	Those who are in close contact with ill people, People with weakened health, children 6-23 months, pregnant women and adults 50 years of age and older are at a higher risk.
How long does it take to become sick?	Up to 8 days before symptoms appear; usually longer than with the common flu.	Typically 1 to 4 days, average 2 days.
How is it spread?	Usually by preparing, handling poultry or eating undercooked birds. Touching surfaces containing the virus may contribute to its spread.	When someone with the flu coughs or sneezes on you. Being in crowded enclosed spaces is a risk factor. The flu virus survives in cold, low humid conditions which is ideal during the winter months.
What are the symptoms?	From typical flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, severe respiratory diseases, and others. Avian Flu is more severe than the common flu and has a 60% death (mortality) rate.	Fever, sore throat, shortness of breath, cough, and muscle aches are common. Severe illness may lead to pneumonia and death.
Is there a vaccine?	Work on developing a vaccine has been underway since April 2005.	Yes. Yearly flu shots are offered in the fall.
Other prevention recommendations	Check CDC Travel advisories before international travel; Avoid bird contact if traveling to a country with Avian flu.	Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, stay at home. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Practice good handwashing.
What is the treatment?	Antivirals.	Antivirals.