

Warnings of a Flu Pandemic

The current outbreak of avian influenza—popularly known as bird flu—in a number of countries is looming as a major international health crisis. **It is believed that most cases of bird flu infection in humans have resulted from contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces**, by touching of germs and then touching their mouth, nose, eating, licking of their fingers and rubbing their eyes.

Let us take an inside look about Bird Flu, what it is? Where it is originated and how to protect ourselves and many other frequently asked questions with answers.

What is the "bird flu"?

Bird flu is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses. These flu viruses occur naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide carry the viruses in their intestines, but usually do not get sick from them. However, bird flu is very contagious among birds and can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill them. **Wild waterfowl can also be responsible for the primary introduction of infection into domestic poultry**

How is avian influenza spread?

Certain birds act as hosts of influenza viruses. Infected birds shed virus in saliva, nasal secretions and feces. Avian influenza viruses spread to susceptible birds when they have contact with contaminated nasal, respiratory and fecal material from infected birds.

Can the avian influenza be spread to humans from infected birds?

In rare instances, people can contract avian influenza. The exact mode of transmission from birds to people is not known, but it is obvious that it has mutated and developed the ability to pass from birds to human but most human cases of avian flu have been traced to direct contact with live infected birds or their dropping

Is it possible to get the bird flu from eating chicken or eggs?

No -- if the meat is fully cooked. Cooking kills flu viruses in poultry, meat, and eggs. The bird flu virus can survive on raw meat from infected poultry. It is also unsafe to eat undercooked poultry or consume raw eggs. or lightly cooked egg products (such as runny eggs).

Proper hygiene -- hand washing and the disinfecting of all surfaces that come in contact with the meat -- is essential. It is also recommended to avoid unnecessary contact with live poultry. This includes markets where live birds are sold, as it is possible for the avian influenza virus to stick to hair and clothing, and it may also be inhaled

Is it possible for this form of influenza to spread from person to person?

At this time, there is no evidence that the current strain of avian influenza in Asia is spread directly from person to person. However, it is possible that the virus could change so that it could spread easily from person to person. If a person, who is sick with human influenza, was exposed to avian influenza, there is a possibility that the avian influenza virus could acquire human influenza genes. This "mixing" could result in the creation of a new subtype of the influenza virus.

Because these viruses do not commonly infect humans, there is little or no immune protection against them in the human population. If an avian virus were able to infect people and gain the ability to spread easily from person to person, an "influenza pandemic" could begin. There is currently no evidence that this is happening.

What are the signs and symptoms of avian influenza?

The symptoms of avian influenza in humans range from typical influenza-like symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, acute respiratory distress, viral pneumonia, and other severe and life-threatening complications.

Is the bird flu deadly?

The current strain of "bird flu" circulating in Asia can be deadly. About two-thirds of infected people can die from this strain.

How do you catch bird flu?

People have caught bird flu from handling infected poultry and from surfaces contaminated with poultry feces. There are a few suspected cases of human-to-human bird flu transmission. This happened only after prolonged face-to-face contact. But bird flu has not learned how to spread easily from person to person.

Who is most vulnerable to bird flu?

Flu is usually most dangerous to young children and to the elderly. But a lot depends on whether there's any immunity to the flu

Why not protect yourself!

Your immune system is an incredibly complex interaction between organs, glands, body systems, surfaces, cells and chemicals in the body. This symphonic concert of processes requires proper nourishment in order to function optimally. And in today's world, we want the best possible immunity from the multitude of diseases we are facing, many of which have been, until now, unknown. Relying on nutrients and natural substances that are more powerful than drugs in activating your immune system is more effective so that it can conquer the flu before you even feel symptoms.

Get healthy now to prepare your immune system for bird flu

You can't reform your immune system in 24 hours. You can't just change your diet one day and expect to be healthier the next day or the next week or even the next month. It takes many months of healthy eating and wise lifestyle choices to make strong, lasting changes in your health and immune system function. ***You'd better start NOW*** if you want to be in peak health by the time the bird flu virus comes around. And, in the worst case, if you were wrong, if you prepared for nothing, then you will at least have a healthy immune system even if there's no bird flu virus

The top antiviral foods and nutrients enhancing immunity

Red Grapes. antibacterial. antioxidant. Antiviral

Berries. antiviral., rich in vitamin c. powerful antioxidant. prevents cell mutations that can lead to cancer. high in fiber.

Cranberry. antibiotic. antiviral

Strawberry. Antiviral, anti-cancer activity. Often eaten by people less likely to develop all types of cancer.

Apple. antibacterial. anti-inflammatory. antioxidant. antiviral. rich in soluble and insoluble fiber. the peel contains quercetin. lowers cholesterol. cancer prevention properties.

Pineapple. antibacterial. antiviral. anti-inflammatory. aids digestion

Plum. Antibacterial. Anti-viral. Laxative.

Onion antibiotic. Anti-inflammatory. antiviral powerful antioxidant. cancer prevention properties. good for allergies. asthma. colds. infections. rub on insect bite to relieve itching

Garlic. a wonder food. antibiotic. antifungal. antioxidant. antiviral. anti-inflammatory. strengthens immune system. lowers blood cholesterol. lowers blood pressure. lowers blood sugar levels. blood thinner. good for asthma. for colds and coughs. may prevent tumors and inhibit the growth of tumors

Soybean. antioxidant. antiviral. estrogen hormone properties. lowers blood cholesterol

Yogurt. a wonderful wonder food. antibacterial. antioxidant. strengthens immune system

Mushrooms. strengthens immune system. block tumor growth. eat mushrooms for the best benefit. cooked. not raw

Honey. antibiotic. wound healing. treatment for intestinal bacteria. sedative. use sparingly. sugars suppress the immune system

Corn. antioxidant. antiviral

Cauliflower. antioxidants. antiviral. lowers cholesterol. fiber. cancer prevention properties. especially for estrogen dependent breast cancers

Carrot. antioxidant. antiviral. fiber. high in beta carotene. strengthens immune system

Cabbage. antibacterial. antioxidant. antiviral. in the cabbage family. and bok choy are the best sources for cancer prevention properties

Broccoli. antioxidants. antiviral. lowers cholesterol. fiber. cancer prevention properties. especially for estrogen dependent breast cancers.

Barley. Long known as a "heart medicine" in the Middle East. Reduces cholesterol. Has anti-viral and anti-cancer activity. Contains potent antioxidants

General Advices

- Avoid contact with wild or domesticated birds such as chickens, ducks and geese. Don't go to farms or market places.
- Stop young children from putting contaminated objects or their own fingers into their mouths.
- Eggshells may be contaminated with bird faces. Wash eggs thoroughly before breaking and wash your hands thoroughly after handling eggs. or as a general rule after handling meat or poultry
- Avoid foods that contain uncooked egg, such as mayonnaise.
- Wash hands, chopping boards and utensils thoroughly after handling raw poultry
- Separate a board used for chopping chicken from the one used for cutting cooked food, vegetables, or fruits
- Cook poultry at high temperatures. Cooking temperatures of 80°C or higher destroy the bird flu virus in about 60 seconds.

Let us unite together to avert the possible outbreak of this pandemic in our country