

## What Advice Would You Give to Someone Traveling to Areas Where Bird Flu has been Found?

Before traveling, check the CDC's website, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), for travel advisories. Be sure your shots are current and your health insurance covers you overseas. Travelers should take steps to minimize risks while on their trips. Avoid contact with chickens and ducks, including droppings and blood. Follow good health habits, such as frequent hand-washing. Avoid live markets, bird farms, and partially cooked bird. If you have any illness within 10 days of returning home from your trip, call your health care provider to make an appointment and be sure to tell your provider about your travel prior to going for the appointment. As yet, no travelers to the effected areas have gotten bird flu.

### For more information:

- [www.hhs.state.ne.us](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us)
- [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)
- [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [www.outdoornebraska.org](http://www.outdoornebraska.org)
- [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

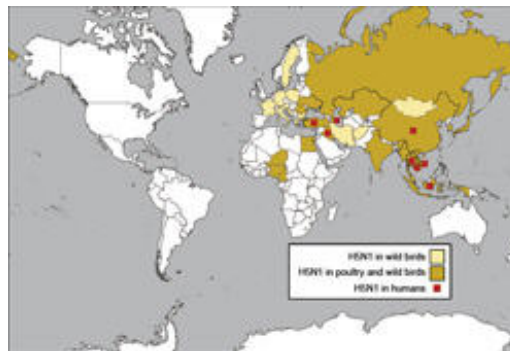


## How are we preparing?

The United States has been working closely with other countries and the World Health Organization (WHO) to strengthen systems to detect outbreaks of influenza that might cause a pandemic.

The effects of a pandemic can be lessened if preparations are made ahead of time. Planning and preparation information and checklists are available from Sarpy/Cass Department of Health to help your family and/ or business prepare for a pandemic.

HHS and other federal agencies are providing funding, advice, and other support to Sarpy/Cass Department of Health to assist with pandemic planning and preparation. The federal government will provide up-to-date information and guidance to the public through the media should an influenza pandemic unfold.



Nations with Confirmed Cases H5N1 Avian Influenza (March 24)

# Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

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# *A Few Facts about Bird Flu...*

## **What is Avian Influenza?**

Avian influenza is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses. These influenza viruses occur naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide carry the viruses in their intestines, but usually do not get sick from them. Infected birds shed influenza virus in their saliva, nasal secretions, and feces. When wild birds interact with domestic

poultry, domestic birds can be infected and become severely ill and die. Human cases of bird flu have been reported in Southeast Asia and Europe. Most human cases came from direct contact with infected birds or their droppings. More than 100 people have contracted bird flu, and about half of them have died. That's why officials are watching for any person-to-person spread of bird flu.



## **How Great is the Risk to Humans?**

At present, the risk is low because humans do not usually come into contact with wild birds and therefore become infected by bird flu. However, during an outbreak in domestic poultry, the likelihood of infection among humans increases. Still as the virus is passed from wild birds to domestic birds, there is a possibility that it will mutate into a form that will more easily infect and spread among humans.

## **Is it Safe to Buy and Eat Chicken or Duck in the U.S.?**

Health officials say it's safe to eat properly cooked poultry in the U.S. The H5N1 bird flu has not been found in the U.S. Cooking to 145 degrees destroys germs, including the bird flu virus. The U.S. bans imports of poultry from areas with bird flu. There is also a worldwide coordination to control the spread of bird flu. Flocks in other countries are monitored for illness; sick and infected birds are separated and destroyed.

## **What are the Symptoms of Bird Flu in People?**

Symptoms of avian influenza in humans have ranged from typical human influenza-like symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, severe respiratory diseases (such as acute respiratory distress), and other severe and life-threatening complications.

## **Why Could Bird Flu be the Next Pandemic?**

Scientists worry that bird flu in southeast Asia could cause the next pandemic. The virus is spreading to birds and other animals in new regions. The virus has infected some people, causing severe illness and death.

## **What's Being Done to Keep Bird Flu From Becoming the Next Pandemic?**

Health officials around the world are watching for any person-to-person spread of bird flu. Public health officials in every state and almost every nation are preparing for pandemic flu. A worldwide network of laboratories detects and tracks flu viruses. There's a program for fast distribution of vaccines and medicines and several systems are in place for sharing emergency health information. National, state, and local preparedness efforts are ongoing.

## **Are Bird Flu Vaccines Available?**

There currently is no commercially available vaccine to protect humans against H5N1 virus that is being seen in Asia and Europe.

A pandemic vaccine cannot be produced until a new pandemic influenza virus emerges and is identified.



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is addressing the problem in a number of ways.

These include the development of pre-pandemic vaccines based on current lethal strains of H5N1, collaboration with industry to increase the Nation's vaccine production capacity, and seeking ways to expand or extend the existing supply. Research is being done to develop new types of influenza vaccines.