

Common Questions about **BIRD FLU**

Q. Will bird flu cause the next influenza pandemic?

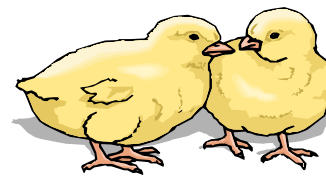
A. The spread of bird (Avian) flu viruses from an infected person to another person has been reported very rarely. It has not been reported to continue beyond one person. A worldwide pandemic could occur if a bird flu virus were to change so that it could be easily passed from person to person. Experts around the world are watching for changes in bird flu that could lead to an influenza pandemic.

Q. Is it safe to eat poultry?

A. Yes, it is safe to eat properly cooked and handled poultry. Cooking destroys germs, including bird flu viruses. Guidelines for safe poultry include the following:



- * Wash hands before and after handling food.
- * Keep raw poultry and its juices away from other food.
- * Keep hands, utensils, and surfaces, such as cutting boards, clean.
- * Use a food thermometer to ensure food has reached the safe internal temperature of 165° F.



Q. What types of birds carry the bird flu?

A. Avian influenza can infect chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese, and guinea fowl, as well as a wide variety of other birds, including migratory waterfowl.

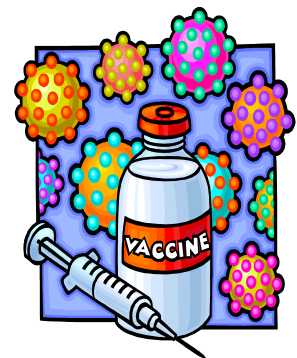


Q. Will the seasonal flu shot protect me against pandemic bird flu?

A. No, it won't protect you against bird flu but it will protect you from seasonal influenza.

Q. Will we have vaccine available if a bird flu occurs?

A. It is not possible to develop a vaccine until after pandemic strain actually comes into existence. Only after the strain emerges, and is isolated, and characterized can a vaccine be developed and manufactured.



Q. Can the bird flu virus be spread in ways besides coughing and sneezing such as handshakes, kissing, sharing drinks, etc.?

A. The virus is primarily spread by airborne droplets that reach the eyes, nose, or mouth but can also spread by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching ones face. This is why practicing good hygiene is important.



Q. What can you do to limit the spread of germs?

- * Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- * Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues.
- * Stay home from work and school if sick, keep children away from others if they are sick.
- * Cook food thoroughly.



Questions or Concerns please contact the Ionia County Health Department at: (616) 527-5341