



H5N1 Avian Flu (H5N1 Bird Flu)

H5N1 is a highly pathogenic avian (bird) flu virus that has caused serious outbreaks in domestic poultry in parts of Asia and the Middle East. Highly pathogenic refers to the virus's ability to produce disease. Although H5N1 does not usually infect humans, nearly 650 cases of human cases of H5N1 have been reported from 15 countries since 2003.

- Most human cases of "highly pathogenic" H5N1 virus infection have occurred in people who had recent contact with sick or dead poultry that were infected with H5N1 viruses. About 60% of people infected with the virus died from their illness.
- Unlike other types of flu, H5N1 usually does not spread between people.
- There have been no reported infections with these viruses in birds, poultry, or people in the United States
- You cannot get infected with these viruses from properly handled and cooked poultry or eggs.

What is highly pathogenic H5N1?

H5N1 is an avian (bird) flu virus that has caused outbreaks in domestic poultry in parts of Asia and the Middle East. Because H5N1 is so deadly to poultry, it is considered "highly pathogenic," or highly disease causing.

Is highly pathogenic H5N1 virus still a threat?

Since 2003, 650 human infections with highly pathogenic H5N1 viruses have been reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by 15 countries. About 60% of these people died from their illness.

In 2011, 62 human H5N1 cases and 34 deaths were reported from five countries—Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Egypt, and Indonesia. Six countries—Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam—have widespread and ongoing infections in their poultry. Poultry outbreaks have occurred in other countries recently as well.

Could I get highly pathogenic H5N1?

Human infection with H5N1 is rare. Most infections occurred after direct or close contact with poultry infected with H5N1. There is no evidence that this virus can spread easily between people.

Symptoms and possible complications of highly pathogenic H5N1 in people can include:

Symptoms:

- Fever and cough
- Acute respiratory distress
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea

Complications:

- Pneumonia
- Respiratory failure
- Shock
- Altered mental state
- Seizures
- Failure of multiple organs (e.g. kidney failure)
- Death

How can I prevent highly pathogenic H5N1 virus infection?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid any contact with sick or dead poultry. This includes avoiding visiting live poultry markets that may be infected with H5N1 when traveling. Also avoid sick people who might have H5N1 virus infection in affected countries.

The United States government carefully controls domestic and imported food products. The US bans poultry and poultry product imported from countries whose poultry are infected by certain bird flu viruses, including H5N1.

You cannot get highly pathogenic H5N1 virus infection from properly handled and cooked poultry and eggs. When preparing poultry or eggs:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw poultry or eggs
- Clean cutting boards and other utensils with soap and water to keep raw poultry from contaminating other foods.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure you cook poultry to a temperature of at least 165° F.
- Cook eggs until whites and yolks are firm.

Thailand has begun a phase 1 clinical trial to test an H5N1 avian, or bird, influenza vaccine in a needle-free, nasal spray form. This trial is a result of international collaboration with health agencies around the world, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA). This is the first step in testing the new vaccine in humans. The study and data analysis is expected to be complete by May 2013.

Who monitors highly pathogenic H5N1 virus in the United States?

If a suspected human case of H5N1 were to occur in the United States, it would be reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC would investigate the case and notify other U.S. Government