

Overview of Human Avian Flu (H5N1) Risk for Persons in Contact with Birds

Background

- Currently, Avian Flu (H5N1) has not been found in any birds (domestic, wild, or pet birds), humans, or other animals in the United States or the American continents.
- Human cases of Avian Flu (H5N1) have only occurred in Asia, and almost all have been associated with close direct contact with infected or ill poultry.

Today's Concerns

- Contact with birds in the United States at the present time does not pose a risk to humans of getting Avian Flu (H5N1).
- Eating properly cooked poultry anywhere in the world is not a risk for getting Avian Flu (H5N1) at this time.

Contact with Birds in the U.S.

- Feeding wild birds in backyards or at parks, etc. has not been determined to be a risk for getting Avian Flu (H5N1), thus there this not a reason to stop these actions. Individuals should always follow proper hygiene during and after these activities, such as thoroughly washing hands with soap and warm water.
- Hunting wild birds, such as pheasants and turkeys, currently does not pose a risk of getting Avian Flu (H5N1), thus there this is not a reason to stop these actions.
- If a dead wild bird is found in your yard, the correct way to dispose of it is by placing the bird in a plastic bag without touching the dead bird with your bare hands (wear gloves or use a shovel or put your hand inside the plastic bag, grab the bird, then pull the bag over the hand resulting with the bird being inside the bag). The dead bird can then be buried or discarded in the outdoor trash. After disposal, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Persons in the United States who own a pet bird should continue to follow recommendations from their veterinarian and/or their healthcare provider regarding proper hygiene when handling their bird, cleaning the bird's cage, and caring for and feeding their bird. Pet birds that live indoors and have no exposure to wild birds are currently not at risk for contracting Avian Flu (H5N1) because this virus is not present in the United States at this time. If you think your bird may be ill, you should consult your veterinarian.

Future

- Surveillance for Avian Flu (H5N1) in both wild and domestic birds is ongoing in the United States and other countries. If the Avian Flu (H5N1) is found in the United States, the public will be informed and further education will be given about how to protect yourself and reduce your risk of getting Avian Flu (H5N1).

Iowans seeking information about Avian Flu (H5N1) should visit the following websites:

<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm>

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/index.html

http://www.avma.org/public_health/influenza/default.asp

Pheasant hunters seeking information about Avian Flu (H5N1) should visit IDNR's website at:

<http://www.iowadnr.com/news/05nov/flu.html>