

## How does avian flu spread?

### ► Bird-to-Bird

AI is mainly spread by direct contact between healthy birds and infected birds, and also through contact with items contaminated by infected birds. The virus is in the feces of infected birds and in secretions from the nose, mouth, and eyes. Contact with infected feces is the most common bird-to-bird transmission.

### ► Bird-to-Human

H5N1 can spread from birds to people through **extensive** direct contact with infected birds. Scientists are concerned that the virus could change into a form that could easily spread from person to person and create a pandemic. For more information, see the Pandemic Flu Facts brochure available at: <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/news/influenzaWebsite/pages/toolbox.htm>.

## Has H5N1 occurred in the United States before?

There have been three outbreaks in poultry in this country; in 1924, 1983, and 2004. No significant human illness resulted from these outbreaks.

## For more information:

### U.S. Government Avian and Pandemic Flu Information

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

### Deployment Health Clinical Center: Avian and Pandemic Influenza Information

<http://www.pdhealth.mil/influenza.asp#ori>

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Avian Influenza

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

### Centers for Infectious Disease Research and Policy: Avian Influenza

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/avianflu/index.html>

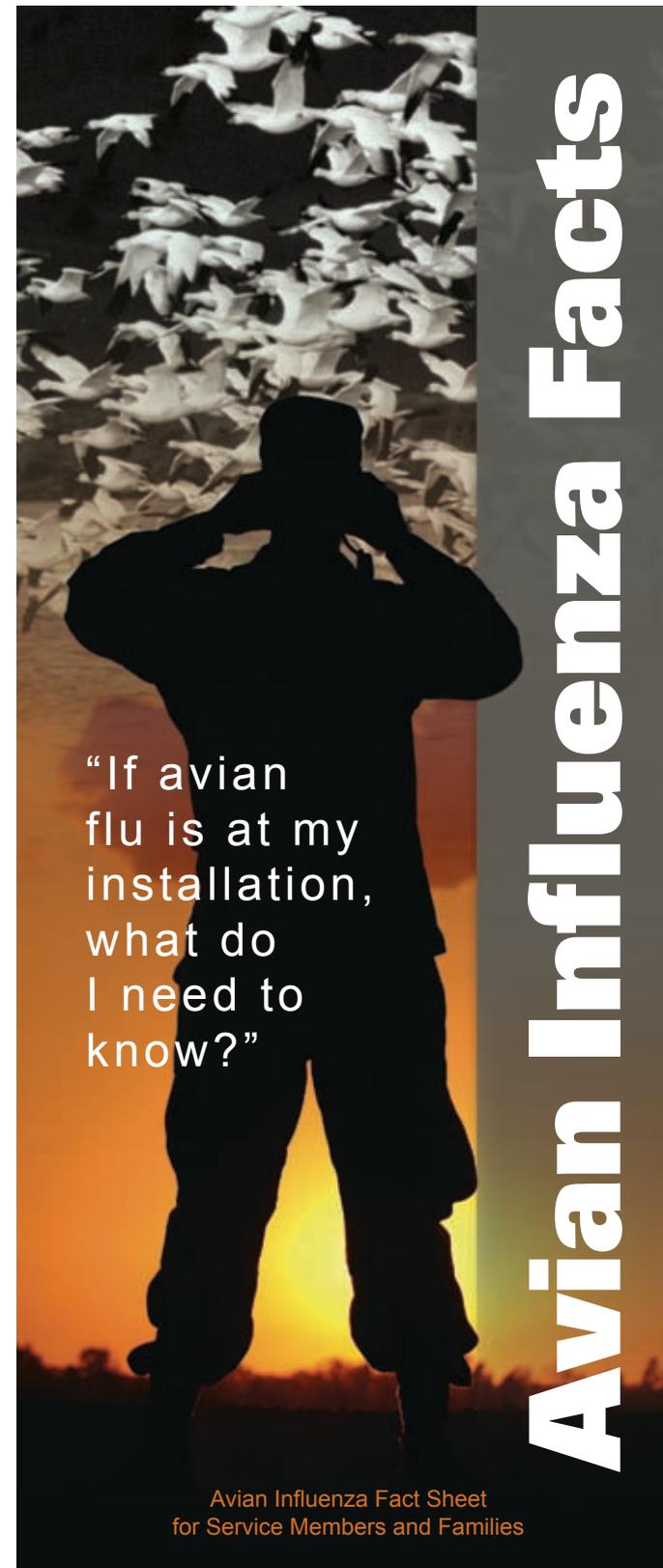
### USDA Avian Influenza Website

[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome?navtype=SU&navid=AVIAN\\_INFLUENZA](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome?navtype=SU&navid=AVIAN_INFLUENZA)



<http://usachppm.apgea.army.mil>

TA-052-0906



“If avian flu is at my installation, what do I need to know?”

# Avian Influenza Facts

## What is avian influenza?

Avian influenza (AI) is a virus that occurs naturally among birds. It is also called avian flu or bird flu. AI viruses can infect chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese, swan, guinea fowl and other birds including migratory waterfowl.

Some forms of avian flu are worse than others. Most AI viruses are classified as **low pathogenicity avian influenza** and cause few symptoms in infected birds. **High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI)** is an extremely contagious illness and causes severe illness or death among infected birds.

## Can people catch avian flu?

Although rare, people are sometimes infected with avian influenza, usually through close contact with infected birds or their feces.

In the current outbreak of HPAI that started in 2003, the H5N1 strain of influenza virus has infected millions of birds but only a small number of humans.

### Is it safe to eat poultry products?

Eating properly handled and cooked poultry is safe. The chance of infected poultry entering the human food chain is extremely low. Proper handling and cooking of poultry protects against avian flu, *Salmonella* and *E. coli*.

- ▶ Wash hands before and after handling food
- ▶ Use latex or similar gloves if handling live birds
- ▶ Keep raw meat, poultry, fish and their juices away from other foods
- ▶ After cutting raw meats, wash hands, cutting board, knife and countertops with hot, soapy water
- ▶ Sanitize cutting boards by using a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water
- ▶ Use a food thermometer to make sure poultry is completely cooked. Cook poultry to at least 165°F (74°C).
- ▶ Cook eggs until whites and yolks are firm

### Is it safe to go outside?

Yes.

- ▶ Always wash your hands after outdoor activities *or* use alcohol-based hand cleaner
- ▶ Avoid contact with wild birds
- ▶ Do not enter bird cages or chicken pens

To become infected with avian flu, a person would have to consume the feces of an infected bird, inhale dust from the feces, or get fecal dust in the eye.

The dust becomes less infectious after it dries or is exposed to sunlight; eventually the virus dies. So dried feces is usually not hazardous. Dust of dried bird feces is only likely to present a hazard in large indoor poultry facilities.

### Is it safe for my pets to go outdoors?

Cats are occasionally infected with avian flu if they feed on infected birds; however, all carnivores including dogs and pigs can be infected by eating infected poultry or wild birds. Be sure to:

- ▶ Report dead birds to local authorities
- ▶ Report dead or sick cats to local authorities
- ▶ Avoid contact between pets and birds or keep pets inside
- ▶ Put on plastic gloves to remove a dead bird. Put the bird in a plastic bag and place outside for collection by local authorities
- ▶ Avoid contact with stray animals
- ▶ Contact your veterinarian if pets show breathing problems or nasal discharge

Avian influenza (AI) is a virus that occurs naturally among birds.



H5N1 can spread from birds to people through **extensive** direct contact with infected birds.

## If Avian Flu is at my installation...

### Is it safe to wade or swim in ponds, lakes, or outdoor swimming pools?

Yes, you can use lakes, reservoirs, outdoor swimming pools, rivers or streams unless there is heavy fecal contamination. You should avoid small bodies of water that are inhabited by a large bird population. Contaminated water could be consumed, inhaled or could get in your eye and infect you.

### Is it safe to hunt?

If you are hunting in areas where avian influenza is currently infecting wild birds, good hygiene is very important. Use latex or similar gloves when handling any wild animal or carcass and be sure to wash your hands. Game birds should be cooked thoroughly (165°F). Contact your local Department of Natural Resources or Range Control for more information on waterfowl hunting regulations.

## what do I need to know?

### Is it safe to have a bird feeder or to feed birds in my backyard?

Backyard bird feeding is safe because the avian flu is currently found mainly in ducks and shorebirds, not in the birds typically seen in your backyard (cardinals, chickadees, finches). However, routine care and cleaning of bird feeders and bird baths will prevent the spread of other diseases among wild birds.

### What if I find a dead bird?

Report sick or dead birds to local authorities or if in the United States contact the USDA toll free at 1-866-487-3297.

