



# Avian Influenza Information (Bird Flu)

Los Angeles World Airports – Risk Management

Employee Safety & Health Section

## 1. What is it?

Avian influenza, or “bird flu” as it is more commonly known, is an influenza virus that naturally occurs in birds. The influenza virus is shed in birds’ saliva, nasal secretions and feces. The infection with avian flu viruses in domestic poultry causes two main forms of disease that are distinguished by low and high virulence.

The spread of avian influenza viruses from one ill person to another has been reported very rarely, and transmission has not been observed to continue beyond one person. During an outbreak of avian influenza among poultry, there is a possible risk to people who have contact with infected birds or surfaces that have been contaminated with secretions or excretions from infected birds.

### CATCHING THE FLU FROM A BIRD

Health care professionals are concerned that the virus could evolve into a form that can be spread from person to person.



#### Spread

Infected birds spread the virus to people and other animals through saliva, feces and nasal secretions.



#### Where

Seven confirmed deaths in Asia and five or six suspected cases.



#### Human treatment

Vaccine is being developed. This strain of flu is resistant to older drugs, but newer ones are expected to work.



#### Food safety

No evidence the virus is passed through eating chicken products but chicken should be cooked at temperatures of at least 158 F.

Sources: World Health Organization; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization

## 2. Human Infection with avian flu viruses

The risk from avian influenza is generally low to most people, because the viruses usually do not infect humans. Most cases of avian influenza infection in humans have resulted from contact with infected poultry (e.g., domesticated chicken, ducks, and turkeys) or surfaces contaminated with secretion/excretions from infected birds.

## 3. Can I get Avian Flu in LA County?

It is very unlikely that a resident of our county will contract the current strain of avian influenza.

Avian flu has been identified in Asia, Africa, Europe, and other parts of the world. Most people who were infected with avian flu had direct contact with infected birds.

## 4. Signs or symptoms

Symptoms include influenza-like symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, severe respiratory diseases, and other severe and life-threatening complications. The symptoms of avian flu may depend on which virus caused the infection.

## 5. Precautions

If possible cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze even if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands and do so every time you cough or sneeze. Make sure to clean you hands often. When available, wash your hands --with soap and warm water-- then rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used.

For additional information, please refer to the following websites:

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

<http://lapublichealth.org/acd/flu.htm>