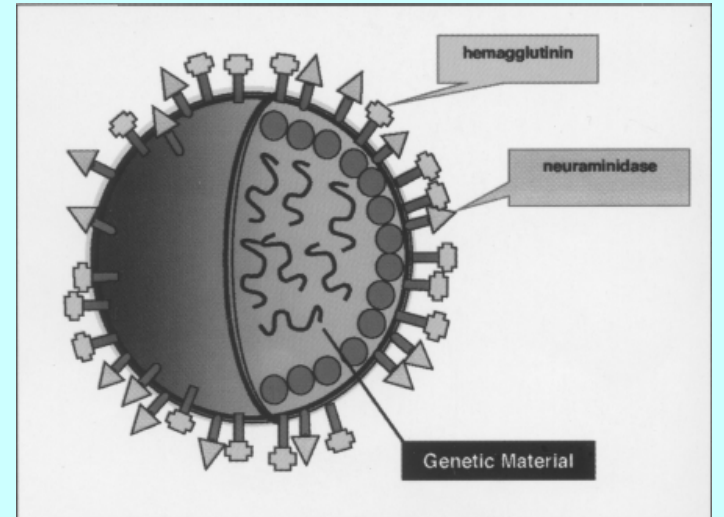


# BIRD FLU FACTS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BIRD FLU

### What is the flu?

Influenza, also called the flu, is caused by a virus. The virus is an organism too small to be seen by the naked eye, but looks like the picture shown on the right. The virus is shaped like a ball with two types of "spikes", an "H" spike and an "N" spike, sticking out of the ball's surface. (The H stands for hemagglutinin; the N stands for neuraminidase. These are both special types of proteins. Unlike the protein you eat, these proteins are not good for you.) A flu virus can have one of 15 different H proteins and one of 9 different N proteins. Scientists name the flu viruses by indicating which H protein is present and which N protein is present. (For example, the virus that caused the 2003-2004 flu was named H3N2.) These "spikes" help the flu virus attach to the cells in your body. Once attached, the virus puts its genetic material into your cells and uses your cells to help make more virus particles. It is this process that makes you ill.



### Seasonal Flu

Every year, a flu virus infects people around the world. This flu is a yearly, or seasonal, event. In the United States, the flu season begins in late December and ends in March, killing about 36,000 people (approximately 250,000-500,000 worldwide). Typically, the seasonal flu is most dangerous for the very young, the very sick, and the very old.

### Bird (Pandemic) Flu

Occasionally, a new virus appears that does not follow the normal seasonal cycle. Pandemic flu will affect people Worldwide and can appear at the same time as seasonal flu. Pandemic, flu, however, will cause many more deaths than seasonal flu. Currently, there is a flu virus in birds, called H5N1, that is of extreme concern to health officials. In Asia, H5N1 has already killed large numbers of chickens, ducks and geese that farmers raise for food. The virus can pass between farmers' birds and wild birds, causing it to spread worldwide. The virus can change slightly (mutate) and be able to pass from birds directly to humans. (There have been several cases reported in Asia.) The final step to a pandemic is a further change (mutation) in the virus that allows it to pass easily from human to human. There have been a few reported cases of the virus being passed from human to human, but as of now, it is a rare event. Many scientists feel that it is just a matter of time, however, before the virus changes (mutates) and easily passes from human to human; thus, causing a pandemic.

### THE SYMPTOMS:

H5N1 symptoms are the same as seasonal flu:

- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Body ache
- ◆ Cough
- ◆ Fatigue

At first, based only on symptoms, you cannot tell the difference between H5N1 and seasonal flu (unlike seasonal or pandemic flu, a common cold does not normally include body ache).

**Human H5N1 cases reported to date have usually started very suddenly with:**

- ◆ fever (from 102°-104°) lasting 3-4 days
- ◆ headache
- ◆ severe muscle aches
- ◆ general weakness/extreme fatigue

**These symptoms are accompanied by:**

- ◆ dry cough
- ◆ sore throat
- ◆ runny or stuffy nose

Stomach or intestinal symptoms, for example nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, are much more common in children than Adults. Contact your doctor.

### FOUR SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

#### COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE

- ◆ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue
- ◆ Put your tissue in the trash can
- ◆ If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands



#### WASH YOUR HANDS

- ◆ Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 10-15 seconds OR use a hand sanitizer after:
  - ◆ Coughing or sneezing
  - ◆ Using the bathroom
  - ◆ Caring for a sick person
  - ◆ Handling garbage or animals



#### KEEP LIVING AND WORK AREAS CLEAN

Clean areas with household detergents (dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, hand soap). Sanitize surfaces with bleach or alcohol.

#### KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

- ◆ Avoid crowds
- ◆ Limit your travel
- ◆ Travel to and from work during off-peak hours, if possible
- ◆ Work from home, if possible

