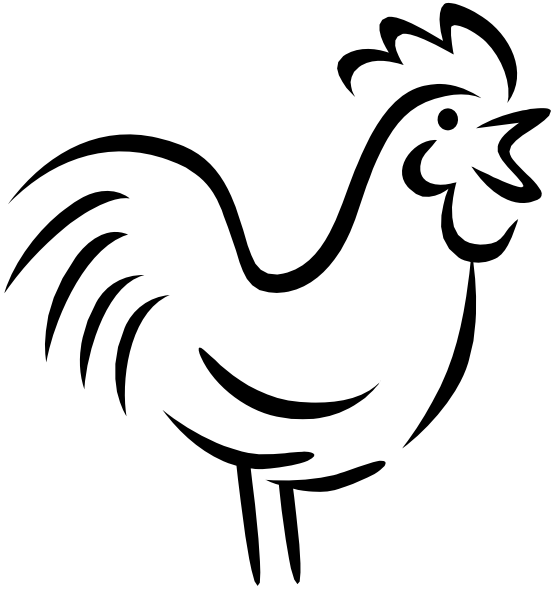


Bird Flu and You

Get The Facts!



Many birds around the world are getting sick from H5N1 avian influenza, or “bird flu.” Experts believe bird flu will come to the United States sometime soon. It is not here right now.

“Bird flu” is not the same thing as “pandemic flu.”

A pandemic would make many people very sick all over the world. It would spread easily from one person to another. Currently, bird flu does not do that. Bird flu would have to mutate (change) to result in a pandemic.

Bird flu is hard for people to catch.

Most of the people who have become sick with bird flu came in close or direct contact with sick chickens, ducks or wild birds and touched them with their bare hands. You can also get bird flu by touching surfaces contaminated with droppings from sick or dead birds.

Meat that has been cooked properly (165 degrees Fahrenheit) cannot give you bird flu.

Do not handle or touch wild birds with your bare hands.

Always wear protective gloves and place the bird in a plastic bag and dispose of it properly. Never rub your eyes, eat or drink before washing your hands with soap and water.

In Harris County, Texas, Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services Mosquito Control test birds for West Nile virus only.

Domestic poultry is being monitored closely in Texas for bird flu.

Poultry owners are always encouraged to report any die-offs, or large groups of dead birds to Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) at 1.800.550.8242. TAHC will then conduct an investigation to determine the cause. For more information, visit their website at www.tahc.state.tx.us

Currently in Texas, wild birds are also being monitored for bird flu.

Several research projects are being conducted throughout the state monitoring for bird flu in wild birds. A fact sheet can be found on the National Wildlife Health Center website at:

www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/avian_influenza/FAQ_avian_influenza.html or for national avian influenza surveillance information please visit <http://wildlifedisease.nbi.gov/ai>.

Harris County

HCPHES

Public Health & Environmental Services

Rev. March 2008