

Influenza Pandemic

Understanding Pandemic Influenza

Most of us have heard about the flu (or “influenza”). But what is bird flu and how is a flu pandemic different from seasonal flu? The following information helps to explain the difference between seasonal, avian and pandemic flu.

	Avian (Bird) Flu	Seasonal (Human) Flu	Pandemic Flu
What is it?	A disease caused by influenza viruses carried and spread among birds.	An infection caused by influenza viruses carried and spread among humans.	A new strain of influenza virus that spreads quickly worldwide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is carried and spread among humans; and • humans have little to no immunity against it.
What is the connection?	<p>What is the link between bird flu, human flu and pandemic flu?</p> <p>Bird flu + Human flu can = Pandemic flu</p> <p>One way a pandemic flu can occur is if bird flu mixes with human flu and creates a new strain of flu virus that can spread easily from human to human.</p>		
How does it spread?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild birds are the main carriers. • Domestic birds (like chickens and turkeys) get the virus from wild birds. • Humans do not easily contract bird flu viruses. • Humans can only get bird flu by handling infected birds or coming into contact with contaminated feces. • There is no evidence that bird flu is passed by eating cooked poultry products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person can get the flu by being in close contact (under 3 feet) with a person who is sneezing and coughing out infected droplets of secretions. • Shaking hands with an infected person or touching a contaminated surface, and then touching your own eyes, nose or mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread the same way as seasonal flu.

Notes

For additional information, visit us at: www.influenza.gc.ca or call our toll free number: 1-800-454-8302



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