

WPPF Working Group on Avian Influenza
13 Jan 2006, Manila

Facts on Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

1. Avian influenza or “bird flu” is a contagious disease of animals caused by a virus that normally infects only birds and, less commonly, pigs.
2. The H5N1 virus is the agent of cause for the recent outbreak of bird flu among the populations of domesticated poultry around the world.
3. Bird flu cannot be transmitted from poultry, meat or egg products that are fully cooked.
4. Preventions against infection
 - Avoid contact with birds, unless necessary
 - Exercise extreme personal hygiene when handling birds and bird products
 - Cook all foods at least at 70°C to kill the virus
 - Eggs should be cooked through, avoid consuming runny egg yolks
 - Do not allow juices from raw poultry to come in contact with cooked or uncooked foods, therefore good food hygiene practice is essential.
5. Currently there is no pandemic outbreak. Health authorities will notify the public should human to human transmissions occur.
6. Preventive vaccines
 - Vaccines against bird flu are being developed and clinical trials on a few potential vaccines are underway.
 - Currently available vaccines are not effective against bird flu
7. Antiviral medications such as such Tamiflu (oseltamivir) and Relenza (zanamivir) can reduce the severity and duration of seasonal influenza but **they are not specific for bird flu.**
8. Do not self-medicate without first consulting with a physician or a pharmacist, especially when you are also suffering from other chronic medical conditions.
9. Consult a pharmacist for proper storage of these medications at home. Stock piling of such medications is not advisable.
10. Beware of potential counterfeit drugs available in the market, it is therefore not recommended to purchase these medications over the Internet. All medications should be obtained or purchase from legal accredited pharmacies or medical clinics.
11. The symptoms of bird flu are similar to ordinary flu. If you are involved with poultry or birds in any way and develop flu-like symptoms, consult your health authority or physicians immediately.
12. For more information on bird flu please refer to the following:
 - Your Ministry of Health or Department of Health
 - Your City or Town Health Office
 - Your national Pharmaceutical Associations
 - http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/avian_faqs/en/index.html
 - http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/avian_influenza/en/