Preventing the spread of avian influenza

Do the following to avoid becoming infected with or spreading avian influenza:

- Always maintain high levels of personal hygiene. Frequent handwashing is very important.
- Receive a seasonal influenza vaccination (flu shot). This shot is for protection against the seasonal flu strain, not avian flu.
- Avoid live animal markets and poultry and pig farms in affected countries.
- Do not handle sick or dead birds, or swim in any body of water that is used by birds.
- Avoid touching surfaces that may be contaminated by poultry or duck droppings.
- Wash hands before and after food preparation.
- The influenza virus is destroyed by heat. Poultry and poultry products that will be consumed, including eggs, must be thoroughly cooked. The inner temperature of meat must reach 158°F (70°C). Wash eggs before using them in cooking, and then wash your hands after handling eggs. Never consume raw poultry products. The virus has also been detected in processed, frozen duck meat. Thoroughly cook any pork products before consuming.
- If you suspect you are infected, seek medical treatment immediately.
• Do the following to increase your level of hygiene:
  – Wash your hands. Hand washing is the single most important and effective component for preventing the transmission of infection. Wash your hands frequently, whether you are sick or healthy, and encourage others to do the same.
  – Use an alcohol-based hand rub when clean water and soap are not available.
  – Avoid people who are coughing and sneezing. Minimize the risk of passing the virus on by covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing. Use a mask, or cover your nose and mouth with your upper forearm or a tissue and then dispose of the tissue.
  – Refrain from touching your own mouth, nose, and eyes.
  – Refrain from touching potentially contaminated surfaces.
  – Frequently clean surfaces that may have become contaminated with the virus, such as doorknobs, phones, or flat surfaces. Regular household cleaning products that contain bleach will kill the flu virus on surfaces.
  – Avoid crowds.
  – Postpone travel if you become infected, until you have recovered.

**Clinical features and symptoms of avian influenza**

- Patients usually, but not always, have been in contact with infected birds.
- The incubation period is 3 days (range 2–7 days).
- Fever greater than 99.5°F (37.5°C)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Shortness of breath
- Sore muscles
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea

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