

Avian Flu Food Handlers

Avian flu is a viral disease and it can be very contagious and even deadly in poultry (e.g., chickens, turkeys, ducks). Of great concern are the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) viruses (e.g., H5N1, H7N9) which have killed millions of birds and infected humans in other countries. If avian flu viruses are found in the U.S. or if you have travel assignments in a country known to have avian flu outbreaks, take appropriate precautions.

Avian Flu Symptoms in Humans

Range from fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches to nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, eye infections, difficulty breathing, pneumonia and severe respiratory disease. Symptoms may depend on which virus strain caused the infection and may be similar to those of seasonal human influenza.

Virus Survival and Destruction

- Avian flu virus survives indefinitely while frozen and remains infectious.
- Cook all poultry products to a minimum temperature of 165°F throughout to destroy the virus.

Preventing Exposure

- Destroy infected poultry before it enters the food chain.
- Avoid inhaling contaminated particles from poultry.

General Precautions for Food Processors and Preparers

- Keep raw and cooked foods separated and use different chopping boards or utensils for each.
- Wash hands thoroughly (for at least 15 seconds) and frequently, preferably with soap and water (or an alcohol-based hand rub, if soap and water are not available) after each handling of raw poultry products and eggs.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes while handling raw poultry products.
- After cooking poultry, place it on a clean plate or surface.

Additional Guidance

- Get the seasonal influenza vaccine.
- If you develop flu-like symptoms, stay at home except to get medical attention.

For more information:



U.S. Department of Labor



www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA (6742)

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