



## Protect Yourself Avian Flu Food Handlers

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

### Avian Flu Symptoms in Humans

Range from: fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches; to diarrhea, eye infections, pneumonia and severe respiratory diseases and; other severe and life-threatening complications. The symptoms of avian influenza may depend on which virus 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.
- The virus is destroyed by adequate heat, i.e., when raw poultry products are cooked to 165°F throughout.
- Eating properly handled and cooked poultry and eggs is safe.

### Preventing Exposure

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

### General Precautions for Food Processors and Preparers

- Separate raw and cooked foods and use different chopping boards or utensils for each.
- Wash hands thoroughly (for 15-20 seconds) and frequently, preferably with soap and water after each handling of raw poultry products and eggs.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes while handling raw poultry products.
- Cook all poultry products to a minimum temperature of 165°F throughout.
- 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 complete information:

 Occupational  
Safety and Health  
Administration  
U.S. Department of Labor  
[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) (800) 321-OSHA

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