

Avian flu and influenza

For most Canadians, the risk of getting avian influenza (bird flu) is extremely low. However, it is important to know how to minimize your risks, especially if you are travelling to an area affected by the avian flu.

☺ How Avian Flu Spreads from Birds to People

It is important not to confuse human cases of *avian influenza* with cases of *human influenza*. Human influenza ("the flu") is a common respiratory disease that spreads easily and rapidly from person to person. Although different strains of the avian flu virus circulate year-round among birds, the virus does not usually spread to people.

In rare instances, however, people do contract the avian flu. The exact mode of transmission from birds to people is not known, but most human cases of the avian flu have been traced to direct contact with live infected birds or their droppings.

The scientific evidence to date shows that the avian flu virus does not spread easily or rapidly from one person to another.

👉 Preventing avian influenza spread in your premises

Vehicles, equipment and clothing can carry the avian influenza virus. As a general practice, poultry owners should strictly limit access to their premises. If visitors must enter, ensure that they take the following biosecurity precautions. These measures can significantly reduce the risk of an avian influenza spread.

👉 MINIMIZING YOUR RISK :

Keep things in perspective. For most Canadians, the risk of contracting the avian flu is extremely low. The risk of health effects from human influenza is far greater. The best way to protect yourself and others from influenza is to:

- Get a flu shot.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water.
- Stay home if you are sick.

For more information on minimizing your risks, see the avian flu travel advisory on the the Public Health Agency of Canada website

**Information for the public :
1-800-454-8302**