

General Questions and Answers

Q: What is Avian Flu?

A: Avian Flu is a specific type of influenza flu virus that primarily affects birds but recently has been reported to affect humans, pigs and cats. The Avian flu virus rarely affects humans, but often causes serious disease or fatality when it does. The virus that causes the Avian flu is a sub-type of the influenza A virus that is known to cause the flu in humans and is associated with influenza epidemics and pandemics. New variations of this virus arise when susceptible animals like pigs; ducks, chickens and humans live together in close proximity. The current Avian flu virus is a highly virulent virus sub-type that has spread more rapidly, with a higher degree of mortality than any other bird flu strain in history.

Q: How is it spread?

A: The virus has been shown to exist in saliva, nasal secretions and feces for about 10 days. Avian Flu can be spread by close contact with infected birds or birds that died from the illness; direct contact with bird droppings or contaminated feed, water, clothing, cages, farm equipment and other surfaces. Eggs and egg products, as well as frozen or adequately cooked poultry products are **unlikely** sources of infection. There are **no** clearly documented cases of the recent avian flu virus spreading from human to human.

Q: What are the symptoms of the avian flu virus?

A: Most frequent symptoms include: fever (38.5 C to 40 C), cough, shortness of breath, swollen lymph nodes. Other common symptoms are: sore throat, rhinorrhoea, and muscle pain. Shortness of breath is an early symptom that can develop into a severe acute respiratory syndrome. On rare occasions, conjunctivitis or gastrointestinal symptoms might appear.

Q: What is currently being done?

A: The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) are treating the recent outbreaks of avian flu very seriously. Drastic measures are being taken to destroy affected birds and therefore, remove the animal reservoir of Avian flu viruses. The current conventional drugs used to treat the influenza virus have proven to be relatively ineffective against the current avian flu virus. The current flu vaccine is ineffective against avian influenza.

For Signs and Symptoms of an Infection to Occur, You Need:

1. Close contact with infected birds or some other source of a significant number of infectious viral particles and
2. A sub-optimal immune system.

Naturopathic Approach

Prevention Strategies:

- Regular, rigorous hand washing with greater than 50 C water with soap and/or detergent is recommended to decrease the likelihood of infection and prevent the spread of the virus.
- The best way to ensure that the avian flu does not cause signs and symptoms in humans is to ensure an optimal innate immune system and robust terrain:
 - Minimize sugar and saturated fat intake.
 - Consume healthy protein with every meal (nuts, seeds, legumes, fish).
 - Address lifestyle stressors and have optimal sleep and rest.
 - Ensure a minimum of 8 glasses of water a day
 - A daily routine that includes dry skin brushing, contrast showers and deep breathing exercises is beneficial.
 - Exercise a minimum of 3 times a week for at least 30 minutes.

- Work with your naturopathic doctors to determine what individual recommendations are required.
- Heat whole poultry to at least 85 C for 30 minutes before eating.
- Heat eggs and other poultry products to at least 75 C.
- Avoid high-risk areas.

Treatment Strategies:

- There are a number of highly effective naturopathic treatments to eliminate the signs and symptoms of the Avian flu virus.
- If you have any of the symptoms of the avian flu and you have been in contact with birds, contact your naturopathic or medical doctor immediately
- As part of the treatment, your naturopathic doctor may recommend:
 - Botanical or homeopathic therapies to fight the infection.
 - Specific supplements, based on individual signs and symptoms, to increase the body's ability to fight the infection and to restore balance to the body.
 - Strict dietary changes to support immune function, maximize nutrients and increase the effective role of the digestive tract in immunity.
 - Blood work, chest x-ray or other laboratory tests to help identify the cause of the signs and symptoms.
 - Isolation of infected people with mandatory personal protective equipment including a high efficiency mask (N-95), gloves and gown worn by their health care providers.

If any symptoms appear consult your health care provider, naturopathic doctor or the CAND for a referral.

Contact:

The Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors
1255 Sheppard Ave. E.
North York, ON M2K 1E2

Tel. 416-496-8633
Toll Free 1-800-551-4381
www.cand.ca