

# What's the Difference? Avian Flu vs. Pan Flu

Indiana State Board of Animal Health

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**A**vian influenza, commonly known as “bird flu,” is a disease found among birds. The virus can infect poultry, as well as a wide variety of other birds including migratory waterfowl. Each year, birds endure a flu season just like humans. On rare occasions avian flu viruses affect people; however, avian influenza is **NOT** the

same thing as a human pandemic. Reports of avian influenza in the United States do **NOT** signal the start of a human pandemic.

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A pandemic can occur when a new disease emerges for which

the human population has little or no immunity. The disease causes serious illness and spreads easily from person to person worldwide. Currently, no human pandemic exists.

In 2006, world health officials have become concerned about the potential for a pandemic because of one avian flu strain that was shown to pass directly from birds to people without mutating.

Like human flu-types, avian influenza exists in many different strains—more than 150. Some are more severe than others; few have significant human health effects.

Human cases have resulted from direct or extremely close contact with infected live birds or consuming under-cooked poultry or eggs. No cases of sustained human-to-human transmission have been reported; therefore, the virus has not become a human pandemic.

Compared to the risk level in other parts of the globe, avian flu presents little threat to most Americans.

U.S. agricultural practices differ greatly from those in countries where this virus has been a problem. U.S. poultry is raised in environmentally controlled barns, where they can be protected from migratory birds and other potential sources of disease.

Few Americans live in close (that is, the same building or home) proximity to their birds.

Poultry is tested for AI and inspected at least twice for any signs of disease before entering the food chain. Sick or diseased birds are rejected and never processed for food.

Consumers can have confidence in our domestic poultry and egg supply.

**Reports of avian influenza in the U.S. do not signal the start of a human pandemic.**