

AVIAN FLU

BE PREPARED!

Introduction

People are not the only ones who can get influenza or the flu. Birds can also become infected with some types of flu virus, called *Avian Influenza*. Different types of this virus have affected birds for a very long time.

Avian influenza viruses are influenza A type viruses (of which there are 16 basic strains recognised) that infect wild bird populations, particularly water birds, without causing symptoms. The virus spreads through bird faeces and contaminated water or dust. When avian influenza spreads to poultry or other birds, it can cause more severe disease. Outbreaks of avian influenza have been recognised in poultry flocks in most countries of the world for many years.

There are several types of avian influenza. The strains that cause the greatest number of deaths are called *highly pathogenic avian influenza* (HPAI). The HPAI strain involved in the current outbreak is called H5N1. It was first recognised in 1997 in Hong Kong, where it caused outbreaks in poultry and led to infections in 18 people with six deaths. Fortunately, the outbreak was halted in Hong Kong at that time by strict control measures in the poultry industry. Migratory waterfowl, notably wild ducks, are natural carriers of the viruses but are unlikely to actually develop signs of an infection. The risk is that waterfowl may pass infection on to domestic birds, which are much more susceptible to the virus.

The virus is found in bird faeces and respiratory secretions. There is no evidence of person-to-person transmission of the virus at this time.

**PEOPLE NEED
TO HAVE CLOSE
CONTACT WITH
INFECTED BIRDS
OR POULTRY
MANURE TO GET
AVIAN INFLUENZA.**

Curriculum focus

PD/H/PE – Personal Health Choices, Safe Living, Communicating, Problem Solving

English – Reading, Presenting, Research, Writing, Drama

HSIE – Social Systems and Structural Outcomes

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- research current global issues affecting society and the environment using information from the internet
- describe safe practices that are appropriate to varying situations and environments
- suggest, consider and select appropriate alternatives when resolving problems
- appraise the values and attitudes of different groups within society in relation to health and lifestyle
- explain how Australian people, systems and communities are globally interconnected and recognise global responsibility
- identify individuals and services in the community that help protect their well being.

Useful website resources

www.health.gov.au

(Avian Flu & Immunise)

www.affa.gov.au

(Avian Flu - Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry)

www.daff.gov.au/corporate_docs/publications/pdf/animalplanthealth/chief_vet/avian_influenza_paper_april06.pdf

www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/world/2005/bird_flu/default.stm

www.who.int

www.science.org.au/nova/090/090box02.htm

(Spanish Flu and Avian Flu)

www.smarttraveller.gov.au

Discussion questions

- What is Avian Flu? How is it spread?
- Can Avian Flu be spread from person to person?
- What would happen if this flu reached Australia? What plans would need to be made and when?
- Discuss who would help in the situation of Avian Flu reaching Australia.
- If Avian Flu has not reached Australia, why do we need to make preparations?
- Discuss with students what vaccines are and how they help prevent diseases. Discuss why it is difficult for a vaccine to be developed. *(Note: Until vaccine manufacturers know what strain of flu virus they are dealing with, they are not able to produce a vaccine. Remind students that human flu viruses are changing all the time. Pharmaceutical companies are working on a vaccine that will become available should it be required.)*
- Revisit the discussion of the 1918 Flu Pandemic and how an Avian Flu Pandemic might relate.

Classroom activities

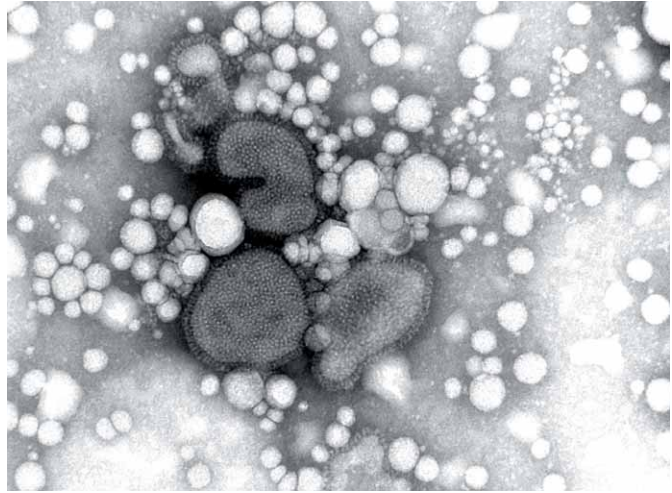
Flow chart

Demonstrate the concept of a simple flow chart to the class. Ask students to use words and illustrations to show how Avian Flu virus is spread from bird to bird and then to humans.

Map it out

Have the students visit the website:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/world/2005/bird_flu/default.stm. Provide them with a world map and ask them to mark all the places bird flu exists or has reached to see how widespread the disease is.



How to help stop the spread of Avian Flu

Download the *Avian Flu Fact Sheet* from the www.teacherstoolkit.net.au

or

www.askted.com.au (Avian Bird Flu)

www.mydr.com.au/default.asp?article=4163

In groups have students research a relevant website and draw up lists describing good healthy habits they can implement to help prevent the spread of Avian Flu. Follow up with a class discussion.

Encourage students to present their information on a poster, to act it out as a drama or to design a Powerpoint display using the information.

Getting ready for any emergency

Discuss with the students reasons why they and their families should take precautions against Avian Flu. Have them suggest ideas for prevention (eg *having a plan if their family has to stay at home for several days or even weeks; building up an emergency supply of food and drinks; brushing up on hygiene practices including proper washing and drying of hands*).

Travel agents

Ask the students to make up a travel brochure for a country of their choice which has experienced Avian Flu. As well as promoting the country ask students to include warnings, alerts and precautions about Avian Flu. The Australian Government's website www.smarttraveller.gov.au is regularly updated and includes a section relating to Avian Flu.

Avian Flu Fact Sheet: ADDITIONAL IDEAS & ACTIVITIES

@ Download from the Teachers' Toolkit website (Lesson Plans)

@ www.teacherstoolkit.net.au

