



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## “Bird Flu”: What You Need To Know

(NAPSA)—Before you become overly concerned about “bird flu,” there are a few important facts you need to know about this disease.

“Bird flu” is not the same thing as human pandemic flu. “Bird flu”—H5N1 highly pathogenic Asian avian influenza—is a severe disease of birds. All the people known to have gotten it had close contact with infected birds, mostly in rural villages in Asia. Where there is no close contact with infected birds, there’s no human disease.

More good news: The food supply is protected. The poultry industry and the U.S. government take Asian avian influenza very seriously because it can threaten commercial poultry. It’s spread by migratory birds, so the federal government monitors wild birds in areas where there could be contact with Asian birds.

In addition, security on poultry farms is very tight. Poultry are kept away from wild birds. Strict procedures keep the virus from being tracked into the birds’ living space. Poultry farmers’ number one priority is to protect their flocks.

The industry and state governments sponsor extensive testing programs to watch for any signs of Asian avian influenza. Under the National Chicken Council’s program, which nearly all chicken companies follow, each flock is tested. Any poultry flock found to be infected with Asian avian influenza would be destroyed on the farm and would not enter the food supply.

You can also feel confident about your chicken or turkey dinners. According to the U.S.



**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other authorities agree: You can’t get avian influenza from properly handled and cooked food.**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), you can’t get “bird flu” from properly handled and cooked food. Just be sure to follow the instructions already printed on each package of fresh meat and poultry sold in the United States. The instructions are the same as they have always been—nothing special is needed. On the remote chance that an infected bird got into the food supply, it wouldn’t affect consumers. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends cooking poultry to a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit. This is more than enough to destroy any flu viruses that may be present.

“American consumers don’t have to worry about getting the avian flu virus from eating poultry,” says Dr. Michael Doyle, director of the Center for Food Safety at the University of Georgia. “We know that if you properly cook poultry, it’s safe.”

For more information, see [www.avianinfluenzainfo.com](http://www.avianinfluenzainfo.com).