

Differences in Types of Influenza Viruses

May 23, 2006

Seasonal Flu	Pandemic Flu	Avian (Bird) Flu
Happens every year, usually in late fall and in winter, can be prevented by a yearly vaccine	Can happen any time of year, can last up to two years. There is no Pandemic Flu virus right now	Ongoing outbreak since 1997, affecting birds in Asia, Europe and Africa. Has infected 218 people as of May 2006
Caused by influenza viruses that circulate among people	Will be caused by a brand new virus not seen in people before	Caused by a virus that is carried by wild birds but kills domestic birds such as chickens
Symptoms are fever, achiness and runny nose. People die of complications such as pneumonia.	Symptoms begin like seasonal flu, but causes more people to be seriously ill and die.	Symptoms are similar to seasonal flu, but people become seriously ill. These people have pneumonia.
Very young, elderly and those with underlying health conditions are at risk of serious illness. Young healthy adults are not.	Healthy adults may be at risk for serious complications.	Only people in close contact with sick birds have gotten sick. Over 50% of those diagnosed have died. It does not spread person-to-person.
Usually has little impact on society	Will cause major social, economic and psychological disruption.	Only those who become sick and their families are affected, but there is a good deal of fear because of this virus. Those who work with poultry must protect themselves if the virus infects their flocks.

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