

## Talking Points: “Avian Influenza/ Dead birds/ Eating Poultry”

### What is Avian Influenza?

- “Bird flu” is the common name for avian influenza, an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses.
- Avian influenza viruses occur naturally among birds.
- Bird flu is contagious among birds and can make some birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, sick and kill them.
- Avian Influenza (H5N1) is one of the bird flu viruses that occur mainly in birds, but there is concern that this virus could change and easily infect humans in the future.
- The Asian strain of Avian Influenza H5N1 has not been detected in birds or humans in the United States.
- Agencies in Florida are monitoring and testing poultry and wild migratory birds for Avian Influenza.

### What do I do if I find a dead bird?

- Do not handle birds that are obviously sick or found dead.
- If you do handle a dead bird, do not rub your eyes, eat, drink or smoke until you can wash your hands.
- Report wild bird deaths to <http://MyFWC.com/bird>
- Check this web page for more information: [www.MyFloridaEH.com](http://www.MyFloridaEH.com)
- Owners of "backyard" chicken flocks should contact the Department of Agriculture at (850) 410-0900 if unexpected chicken deaths occur in their flocks.

### What about eating chicken, turkey or eggs?

- Poultry that is properly cooked is safe to eat.
- Do not eat raw poultry parts, including raw blood, or raw eggs.
- After handling frozen or thawed raw poultry or eggs, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Wash and thoroughly clean all surfaces and utensils that have been in contact with raw meat.
- Thorough cooking of poultry meat will kill viruses. The poultry meat should not be pink in any part and needs to reach 165°F at the center.
- Egg yolks should not be runny or liquid.

### How can I protect myself from bird flu and other forms of flu?

- While there is no vaccination currently available for bird flu, these are simple steps that can help prevent any flu:
  - ✓ Stay home when you are sick and keep sick children home;
  - ✓ Clean your hands often with soap and water or, if soap and water are unavailable, with an alcohol-based hand cleaner;
  - ✓ To keep from spreading germs to yourself and others, avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth;
  - ✓ Stay away from people who are sick;
  - ✓ Cover you nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze and throw the used tissue away.
  - ✓ If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
  - ✓ Do not handle dead birds.

### Other important steps you can take:

- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after touching a bird
- Wear rubber gloves when cleaning birds you plan to eat, or when cleaning bird feeders.