

FACT SHEET – *Bird Flu and Pets*

YOUR PET CAN GET BIRD FLU

A small number of animals in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East have been infected with bird flu.

- Wild birds and poultry are the animals most likely to get bird flu.
- While it is rare, other wild and domestic animals have been infected.
- Some domestic animals that have had confirmed cases of bird flu include:
 - Pigs
 - Pet birds
 - Cats
 - Dogs

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

KY Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Frankfort, KY

<http://healthalerts.ky.gov>

KY Regional Poison Center Louisville, KY

EMERGENCY: 1-800-222-1222

<http://www.krpc.com/>

Lake Cumberland District Health Dept.
(606) 678 – 4761

The Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC) Atlanta, GA

Toll free: 1-800-311-3435

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic/>

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov>

IT IS UNLIKELY THAT YOU WILL GET BIRD FLU FROM YOUR PET

Pigs, cats and pet birds are of the greatest concern for bird flu infections. Dogs have been infected, but only rarely.

- Infections have usually occurred when there have been outbreaks nearby in wild birds and poultry.
- Pets usually get infected when they eat raw infected meat or come into contact with a sick bird or its droppings.
 - Cats are the most likely of all household pets to get infected and spread the disease.
 - In countries with bird flu outbreaks, cats have found weak or dead birds, ate them, and then became infected with bird flu.
- There has been no known case of a person getting bird flu from a pet.

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR PET HAS BIRD FLU, AVOID CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE ANIMAL AND CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN.



FACT SHEET – *Bird Flu and Pets (continued)*

TIPS FOR PET OWNERS

- **Dogs:** There is very little information about bird flu infections in dogs. It is not clear how susceptible dogs are to bird flu, but it is best to take the following precautions:
 - When taking dogs outside, restrain them on a leash.
 - Avoid contact between dogs and wild birds or poultry (or their droppings).
 - Do not let dogs pick up dead birds or other animals.
- **Pet Birds:** Pet birds have become infected with bird flu when they were exposed to other infected birds. Precautions for protecting pet birds include:
 - Keep pet birds indoors, and do not allow them to have any contact with wild birds.
 - Do not introduce new birds into your home. If you do, make sure they are first quarantined and tested for bird flu.
 - Make sure everyone who touches your birds or their cages has clean hands, clothes and shoes (so that they don't accidentally track the germs from wild birds into your home).
 - Do not share supplies or housing with other bird owners.
- **Cats:** Cats have become infected with bird flu when exposed to infected birds in areas with known bird flu outbreaks. Recommendations for protecting cats include:
 - Keep cats indoors. This will keep cats from stalking wild birds and from bringing dead birds home to you.
 - Protect your cats' food and water sources from wild bird contact.
 - Do not feed cats raw poultry or raw eggs.
 - Be cautious about handling stray cats in areas that have known bird flu outbreaks. Do not let your own cats come in contact with strays because the virus can be passed from cat-to-cat.
 - Do not touch sick or dead stray cats. Report sick or dead cats to a local veterinarian, your community health department or animal control.
 - Consult a veterinarian if your cat shows signs of breathing trouble or nasal discharge.
- **All pets:** Include your pet in planning for a pandemic. Have extra supplies of your pet's food, supplies and any medications on hand.