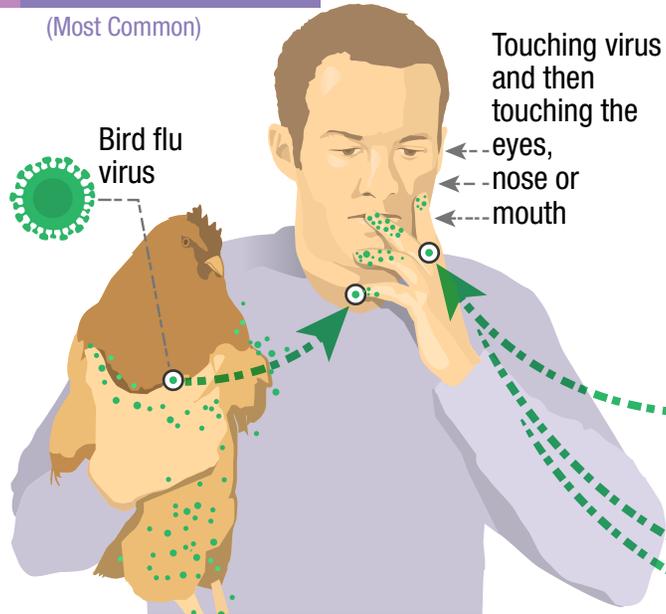


# How Infected Backyard Poultry Could Spread Bird Flu to People

Human Infections with Bird Flu Viruses Rare But Possible

## 1 Direct Contact

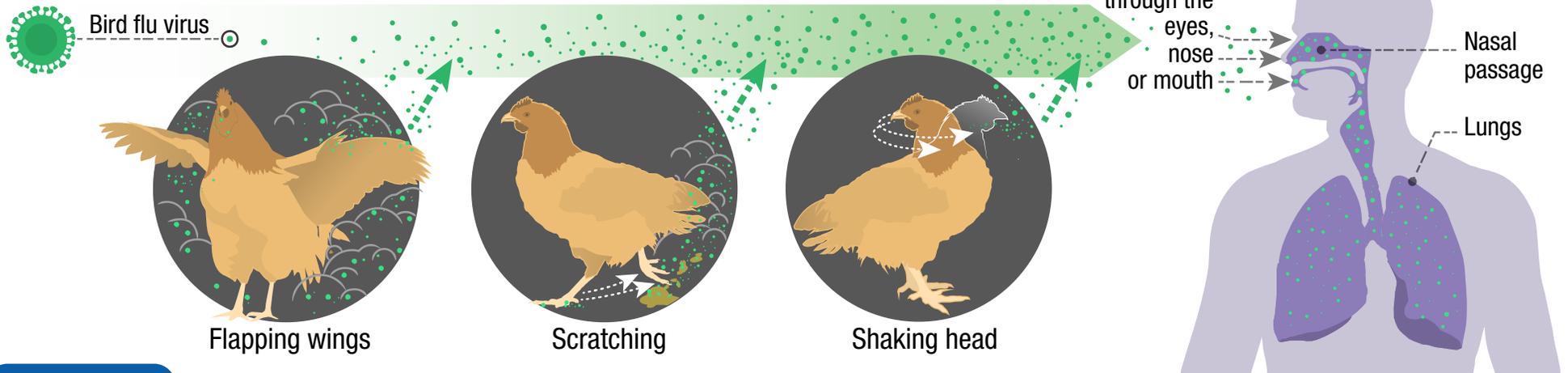
(Most Common)



## 2 Contaminated Surfaces



## 3 Bird Flu Virus in the Air (in Droplets or Dust)



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Bird flu infections in people are rare, but possible. Most reported bird flu infections in people have happened after unprotected contact with infected birds or contaminated surfaces. This fact sheet has information about bird flu and bird flu infections in people.**

## Bird Flu in Birds

Wild water birds (like ducks and geese) can be infected with bird flu viruses, but usually do not get sick. Infected birds have virus in their saliva, mucous and droppings (feces). Bird flu viruses spread easily between birds. Some of these viruses can cause serious illness and death in domestic poultry (like chickens, ducks and turkeys).

## Bird Flu & People

It is rare for people to get infected with bird flu viruses, but it can happen. Bird flu viruses can infect people when enough virus gets into a person's eyes, nose or mouth, or is inhaled. This might happen when virus is in the air (in droplets or possibly dust) and a person breathes it in, or when a person touches something that has virus on it and then touches their mouth, eyes or nose. (See picture on reverse side.) Most bird flu infections in people have happened after unprotected contact with infected birds or contaminated surfaces. In some cases, however, no direct contact has been reported. No human bird flu infections have been reported from proper handling of poultry meat or from eating properly cooked poultry or poultry products.

Bird flu illness in people has ranged from mild to severe. Signs and symptoms of bird flu infections in people can include: fever (temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater) or feeling feverish, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, fatigue, headaches, eye redness (or conjunctivitis), and difficulty breathing. Other possible symptoms are diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. As with seasonal flu, some people are at high risk of getting very sick from bird flu infections, including pregnant women, people with weakened immune systems and people 65 and older. Human infections with bird flu viruses usually can be treated with the same prescription drugs that are used to treat human seasonal flu viruses. These are called “flu antiviral drugs.”

## Bird Flu Outbreaks in Birds

Outbreaks of bird flu happen among birds from time to time. When deadly bird flu outbreaks happen in U.S. poultry, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) works with industry, state and other government partners to stop the outbreak so that it does not spread to other poultry. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention works with partners to protect the public's health during these outbreaks. The risk to the public from bird flu outbreaks is low; however, because other bird flu viruses have infected people, it is possible that human infections with these viruses could occur. Risk depends on exposure. People with no contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces are thought to be at very low to no risk of infection. People with close or prolonged unprotected contact with infected birds or contaminated environments are thought to be at greater (though probably still low) risk of infection.



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Control and Prevention

More information about bird flu is available at [www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu)