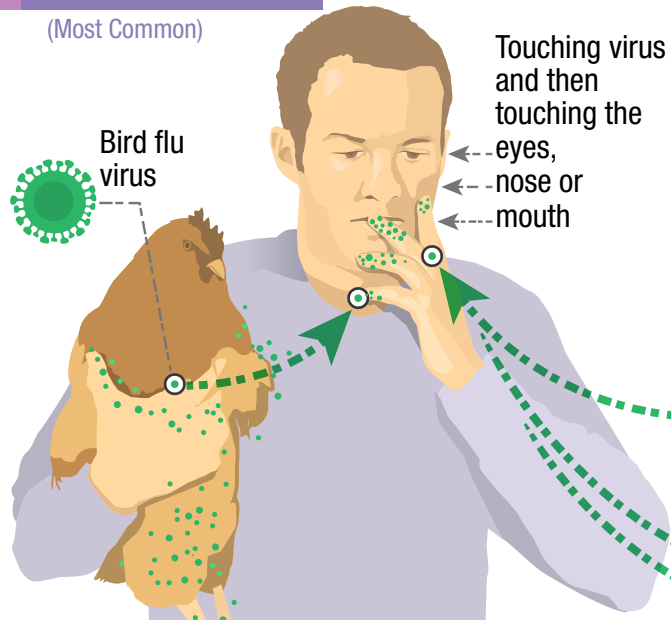


# How Infected Backyard Poultry Could Spread Bird Flu to People

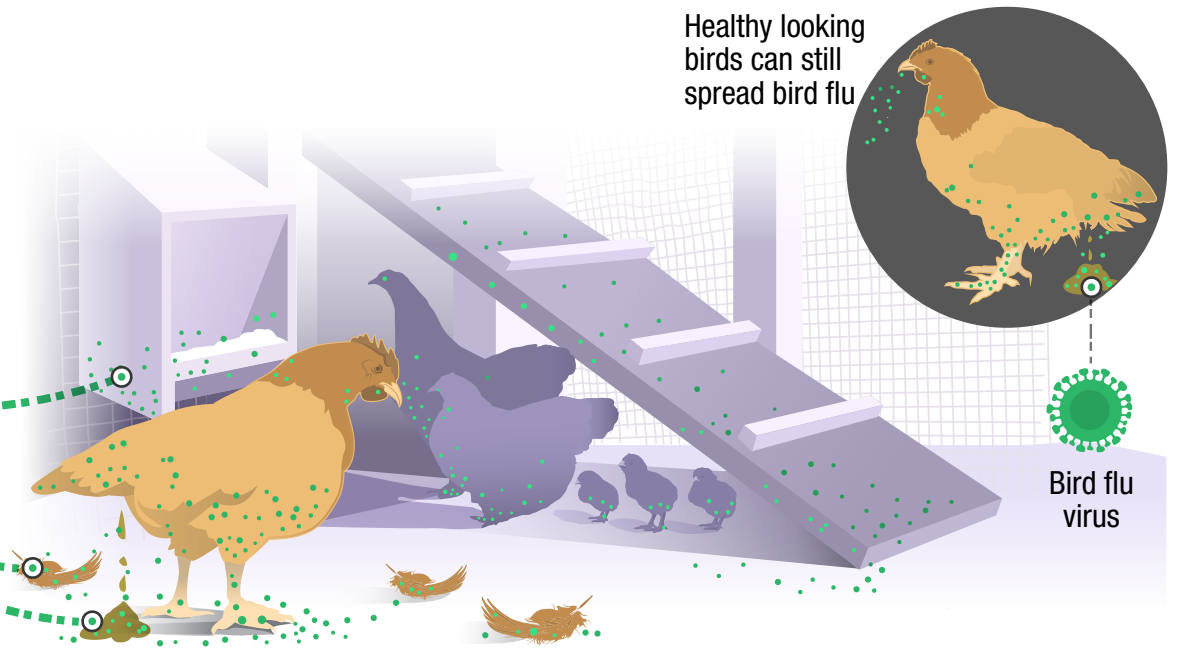
Human Infections with Bird Flu Viruses Rare But Possible

## 1 Direct Contact

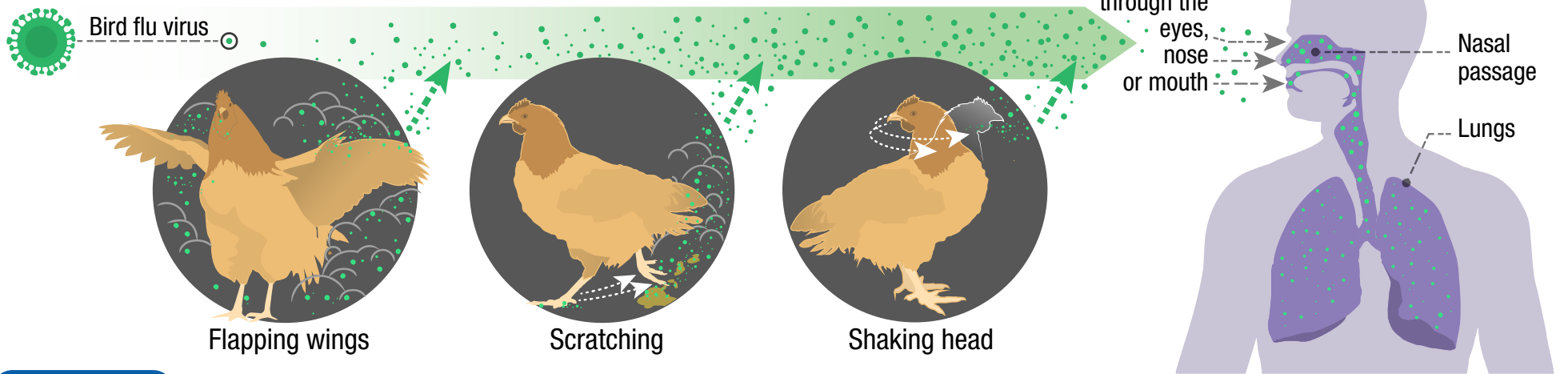
(Most Common)



## 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

[www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/avian-in-humans.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/avian-in-humans.htm)

**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 provides information about bird flu and bird flu infections in people.**

## Bird Flu in Wild Birds

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

## Bird Flu in Poultry

Domesticated birds (chickens, turkeys, ducks, etc.) can become infected with bird flu A viruses through direct contact with infected waterfowl or other infected poultry, or through contact with surfaces that have been contaminated with the viruses. Bird Flu is a serious poultry disease and requires rapid response because it is highly contagious and can be fatal to chickens. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) works with its federal, state, local and industry partners to quickly respond to any bird flu findings. Bird flu A(H5) or A(H7) virus outbreaks in poultry, where depopulation (or culling, also called “stamping out”) of infected flocks is usually carried out.

## Bird Flu in 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 close, prolonged, unprotected contact with infected birds or contaminated surfaces. People who are sick with bird flu virus infection can be treated with the same prescription drugs that are used to treat people who are sick from human seasonal flu virus infection. People who have had no contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces are thought to be at very low risk of infection. People with close, prolonged, unprotected exposure with infected birds or contaminated environments are thought to be at greater (though probably still low) risk of infection.

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 Outbreaks in Birds

Outbreaks of bird flu happen among birds from time to time. When 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. Surveillance of flocks that are nearby or linked to the infected flock(s) and quarantine of exposed flocks with culling if disease is detected, are the preferred control and eradication methods. 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.



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Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

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