

## **Avian (Bird) Influenza: Fact Sheet # 1**

### **Health Information**

Currently there is **a very low risk** of getting avian influenza in the Northwest Territories.

#### **What is avian influenza?**

Avian influenza is a contagious viral infection that can affect all species of birds, and less commonly, infect mammals such as pigs and humans.

#### **Can people get avian influenza?**

Avian influenza does not typically infect people. However, some subtypes of the type A virus, such as H5N1, H7N7, H7N3 and H9N2, have occasionally caused illness in people. Specific variants of H5N1 have been associated with the most serious illnesses in people.

#### **What are the symptoms of avian influenza?**

The symptoms of avian influenza can range from typical flu-like illness (fever, sore throat, cough and body aches), to pneumonia, difficulty breathing and other serious complications that can result in death.

#### **Is there a vaccine?**

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent H5N1 infection. Researchers are in the process of developing a vaccine, but it is difficult to say when it will be available.

#### **For further information:**

Contact the Office of The Chief Medical Health Officer at (867) 920-8877.

Visit the following websites:

[www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca](http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca) – NWT Department of Health and Social Services (See Programs & Services Section)

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/avian\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/avian_e.html) – Public Health Agency of Canada