

National Nutrition Month

Mealtime is Important Family Time

The most important part of your family's mealtime is...**your family!** Eating meals together can actually improve everyone's eating habits.

Sharing meals can have a long-lasting effect on children, who learn by modeling themselves after their parents. Eating together as a family lets parents show their children, by example, how to choose nutritious foods, know when they are full and how to try new foods. Children also learn valuable social skills like table manners and how to carry on a conversation.

With today's hectic schedules, family mealtime can be an important time for talking about the day's events and for staying connected with each other.

Here are some guidelines to help with choosing foods to support good health for the entire family:

Choose a variety of foods from the basic food groups: meat, dairy, fruits, vegetables and grains. It takes a variety of food to provide everything we need to stay strong and healthy. Choose food that has lots of vitamins and minerals, and not too many calories.

Don't eat more calories than you use because excess calories are stored as body fat. Pick portions that are right, and balance food intake with physical activity.

Be physically active every day. Plan activities the whole family can enjoy, such as nature walks, bicycling or dancing.

Eat more fruits and vegetables. They're packed with important vitamins, minerals, fiber and other essentials that contribute to good health.

Eat more whole grains and choose more non-fat

or low-fat milk or milk products—preferably three servings of each per day. Whole grains contain fiber and other beneficial nutrients. Dairy foods are an excellent source of calcium, protein and other vitamins and minerals that are important for a child's growth and development. Calcium is important at all ages, but is especially important for a child's growing bones.

Choose fats wisely. Fat is a nutrient, too, but some fats are better than others. Choose lean meat, chicken and fish and non-fat or low-fat dairy foods.

Choose carbohydrates wisely. Carbohydrate foods like grains, beans, fruits and some vegetables provide the fuel we need to power us throughout the day. Be smart about your choices. Make sure most of the "carbs" you eat have plenty of fiber, vitamins and minerals.

Choose healthy restaurants.

Ask for nutrition information. Choose a restaurant that offers you a wide range of choices: low-fat dressings, nutritious side dishes and items that are baked or grilled—not fried. And make sure the restaurant offers children's portions. They are

smaller and have been designed to provide the right amount of nourishment for smaller bodies.

Our **Healthy Choices Restaurant Program** allows you to select restaurants that offer healthy meal options for children. You can find out if your favorite restaurant is on our **Healthy Choices** list by visiting www.PinellasWellness.com.

Make family mealtime the best part of everyone's day!

For more information about good nutrition, visit www.PinellasWellness.com or www.EatRight.org



Pinellas County Health Department



Fighting Fear with Facts Avian Influenza Questions & Answers

What is avian influenza?

Avian influenza, or “bird flu,” is an illness caused by viruses that naturally occur in birds. The type of avian flu that has been spreading in Asia is known as *H5N1*.

Can people catch avian influenza viruses?

People usually do not become infected with avian flu viruses, but a number of infections from *H5N1* have been reported in Asia. Many of those infected have died. Most of the people infected with *H5N1* had very close contact with sick birds. ***There have been no reported cases of H5N1 in the U.S.***

How does avian influenza spread?

People have become infected with the virus as a result of contact with infected birds or their droppings. This includes contact during plucking, handling or playing with infected birds, or contact with surfaces contaminated with droppings from infected birds.

What are the signs of avian flu in people?

Many of the human cases reported in Asia had typical flu symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, headache and muscle aches. Some people developed severe pneumonia and some died from respiratory failure.

Is there a shot to prevent avian flu?

Not yet. However, experts in many countries are working to develop a vaccine to help prevent avian flu. Vaccines are created to prevent certain viruses. The flu shot you got in the fall is a formula that helps prevent the specific types of human flu that are circulating this year. It does not prevent avian flu.

What is the treatment for avian flu in people?

Just like most other infections caused by viruses, there isn't a medicine to cure avian flu. However, if it is caught early, there are medicines that can help shorten the length and decrease the severity of the illness.

Is it safe to travel to Asia?

The U.S. has not issued any warnings regarding travel to Asia or other areas where there have been outbreaks of avian influenza. Travelers can check to see if there are advisories by visiting www.cdc.gov/travel. Travelers to countries with avian flu should avoid live or dead birds, live bird markets, poultry farms, bird cages and poultry cooking equipment.

Is it safe to hunt and eat game birds?

Yes. ***At this time, there is no H5N1 in the U.S.*** As always, hunters should use disposable, waterproof gloves when handling game birds, and should wash their hands afterwards.

Why are health experts watching H5N1 so closely?

Changes in flu viruses are common. So far, the *H5N1* virus has not changed enough to spread easily from person to person. However, any time an avian flu virus infects people (as has happened in Asia), there is a chance that the virus could change, or “mutate,” and become a *new* virus that spreads easily between people.

Our immune systems would not recognize a new virus, and we would have difficulties in fighting it off. This means that the new virus could cause serious illness and death.

When a new virus emerges that is not easily controlled, it could spread rapidly around the world and cause a pandemic. Health experts and scientists are watching *H5N1* carefully to detect any possible changes in hopes of preventing a pandemic. ***There have been no reported cases of H5N1 in the U.S.***

What is the difference between an epidemic and a pandemic?

An *epidemic* is an outbreak of disease that occurs in one or a few limited areas, such as a city or state.

A *pandemic* is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a *new* flu virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity and for which there is no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person, causes serious illness, and can sweep across the country and around the world in very short time.

What can individuals do now?

The best thing to do is to stay healthy, plan and prepare. For more information on avian and pandemic influenza, visit www.pandemicflu.gov



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