

Avian influenza

Disease outbreak news

1 November 2019

Avian influenza—known informally as **avian flu** or **bird flu** is a variety of [influenza](#) caused by [viruses](#) adapted to [birds](#).^{[1](#)[2](#)[3](#)[4](#)[5](#)[6](#)[7](#)} The type with the greatest risk is **highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)**. Bird flu is similar to [swine flu](#), [dog flu](#), [horse flu](#) and [human flu](#) as an illness caused by strains of influenza viruses that have adapted to a specific host. Out of the three types of influenza viruses ([A](#), [B](#), and [C](#)), influenza A virus is a [zoonotic](#) infection with a natural reservoir almost entirely in birds.^{[8](#)} Avian influenza, for most purposes, refers to the influenza A virus.