

The Truth about Bird Flu

Much has been reported about the potential for illness and death as the result of bird flu. But is it a true threat or just another case of the media capitalizing on our fears?

Leslie Ann Dauphin, Ph.D., a microbiologist at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and recent author of *The Germ Handbook (Siloam)*, has researched the avian influenza virus that causes bird flu. Dauphin told SpiritLed Woman the virus does not usually infect people.

Dauphin says: "Although rare, the viruses...may be transmitted to humans via direct contact with infected birds or surfaces that infected birds have been in contact with...[or] through an intermediate host, such as a pig."

Dauphin says the risk of becoming infected is relatively low, but "for people who work with poultry or who are in frequent contact with birds, the risk may be higher." She recommends the following advice to decrease these risks:

- Avoid birds suspected to be sick.
- Avoid bird saliva, nasal secretions and waste.
- If working with poultry, wear gloves and wash hands.
- Disinfect surfaces birds have been in contact with.

Symptoms range from those commonly associated with a typical flu-cough, sore throat, fever and muscle aches-to eye infections, respiratory illness and even more severe complications. Log on to for additional information.