

WELLNESS UPDATE 2006, #3

AVIAN (BIRD) FLU

There has recently been a great deal of discussion about Avian, or Bird, Flu and other pandemic influenza. This Wellness Update provides information from the Centers for Disease Control, Iowa Department of Public Health and the United States Department of Health and Human Services web site dedicated to pandemic influenza. Schools are encouraged to use this information about Avian flu to educate their constituents and to plan an appropriate response to any influenza pandemic.

CURRENT FACTS ABOUT AVIAN FLU IN THE UNITED STATES:

- Avian Flu has **NOT** been found in any birds, humans or other animals in the United States or the American continents.
- Contact with birds in the United States does **NOT** pose a risk to humans of getting Avian Flu at the present time.
- Eating poorly cooked poultry anywhere in the world is **NOT** a risk for getting Avian Flu at this time.

CURRENT FACTS ABOUT PANDEMIC INFLUENZA:

- Pandemic influenza refers to a strain of influenza that has the ability to spread across the world.
- From 1900-2000 there were three influenza pandemics, all about 30 years apart.
- The Iowa Department of Public Health tracks different types of influenza that occur and the IDPH has a pandemic influenza response plan.
- There is currently no vaccine for pandemic influenza because no one knows what strain will cause pandemic influenza.

SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS TO HELP PREVENT PANDEMIC INFLUENZA:

- Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap, scrubbing at least 15 seconds.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and use disposable tissues.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- If a bird flu pandemic seems imminent, use the elbow or knuckle bump to greet people rather than shaking hands.
- If you are ill, stay home.

RESOURCES FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON AVIAN AND PANDEMIC INFLUENZA:

www.pandemicflu.gov - checklist to assist schools in developing and/or improving plans to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic.

www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp - information about pandemic influenza in general and Avian Flu in particular.

www.cdc.gov - information about pandemic influenza, Avian Flu and other health concerns.

www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza - information about Avian Flu.

Questions and/or comments about areas dealing with student-athlete's wellness are welcome and encouraged. They should be directed to Alan Beste, ATC, LAT, Assistant Executive Director, Iowa High School Athletic Association, PO Box 10, Boone, IA 50036. (515) 432-2011. <abeste@iahsaa.org>