What is avian influenza?
Avian influenza is a rapidly spreading viral disease that mainly infects birds.

Is it contagious?
• Yes, it is contagious.
• The disease may spread by direct contact with infected birds or objects contaminated by them.
• Birds are the most susceptible animals.
• The disease exists naturally in wild birds.
• Although rare, humans and other mammals can be vulnerable to the disease.
• Person-to-person spread is extremely rare.

How is avian influenza treated?
• In birds, there is no known treatment.
• Although there are vaccines available for poultry, there is not a vaccine that covers all 15 strains of the disease. Therefore, since there is no way to determine which strain will infect a flock, vaccines are generally not practical to prevent infection in birds.
• Antiviral medications may be effective for human cases.

Are there public health risks?
• Although rare, humans and other mammals can be vulnerable to the disease.
• Most human cases have occurred in people with close contact to infected birds or their environment.
• If you have had contact with infected birds or are showing symptoms, contact your physician immediately.
• There have been no reported cases of avian influenza following consumption of fully-cooked meat.