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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
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*Medical Focus - Avian Flu Essentials*

November 22, 2005



Dear Colleague:

As we prepare to gather with our families this Thanksgiving, it is important to remember that H5N1 or avian flu is not a viral strain that has been found in American poultry. So far, documented cases in Asia and Europe have involved people who became infected when they lived in close quarters with birds or handled live ones.

This holiday season it is safe to eat turkey, chicken, or eggs. To ensure maximum safety, make sure meat or eggs are well cooked. A food thermometer can be used to check that the center of a turkey reaches at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit when it is roasting. The U.S. Department of Agriculture website contains additional information on how to handle and properly cook poultry.

In addition, wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap as well as clean kitchen counters with disinfectants after handling raw meat. Furthermore, cover and refrigerate food promptly at the end of the meal. These precautions can protect against other foodborne illnesses such as Salmonella.

I hope you enjoy the holidays and the Thanksgiving meal as your family and you celebrate this yearly tradition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Burgess". The signature is stylized and overlaps the printed name below it.

Congressman Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress

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