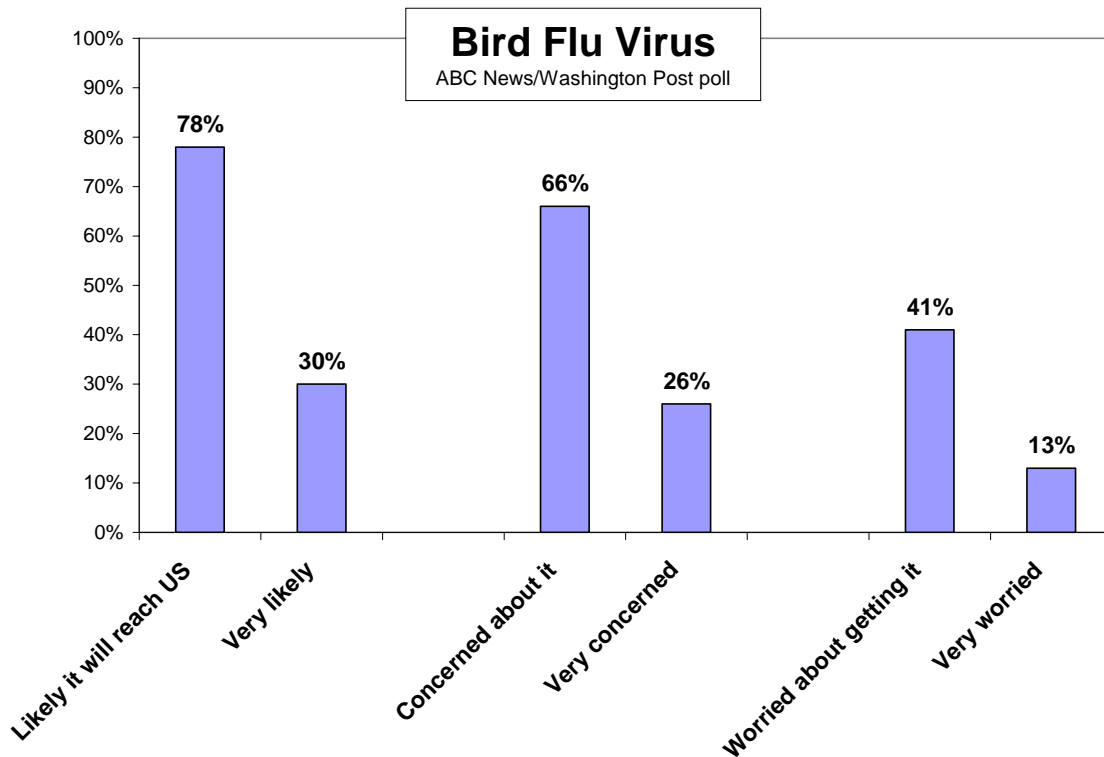


## **Most Worried about Bird Flu, But Confident in Gov't Response**

Nearly eight in 10 Americans think the bird flu virus will reach the United States and two-thirds are concerned about it. But fears of infection are not strongly felt, and most express at least some confidence in the government's ability to respond effectively.

While expectations and concerns are broad, they're much less deep. Seventy-eight percent in this ABC News poll think the virus will reach these shores, but just three in 10 call it "very" likely. Sixty-six percent are worried about it, but just 26 percent are "very" concerned about that happening.

Fewer overall, four in 10, worry that they or a family member will catch the disease. And again this concern is not intense – just 13 percent are worried a "great deal."



Should an outbreak occur, most Americans feel secure that it will be properly taken care of. Nearly six in 10 are confident the federal government will respond effectively, and just under two-thirds think their local hospitals and health agencies can handle it.

But there is room for doubt: Most are only somewhat confident the authorities can respond effectively, as opposed to feeling completely assured.

PERSONAL CONCERN – Concern about catching bird flu is similar to personal concern about getting SARS in early April 2003 (38 percent), but lower than peak fears of exposure to West Nile virus, 53 percent in a September 2002 Gallup poll. Of course, if there were any confirmed reports of bird flu in this country, concern about getting it could be expected to rise.

Midwesterners and Southerners are more worried about getting the bird flu virus than Northeasterners or Westerners. Lower-income Americans are more concerned than higher-income people. And naturally, people who think it's likely the virus will reach this country are more apt to be concerned about getting it than those who think it's unlikely.

PARTY – Compared with Republicans, Democrats are somewhat more concerned about the virus reaching this country and about personally getting it; that may be partly due to their lower faith in the federal government to deal with it. Fifty-three percent of Democrats are confident the government can respond effectively to an outbreak, compared with more than seven in 10 Republicans.

Democrats do express somewhat more confidence in their local health agencies than in the federal government.

	All	Dem	Rep	Ind
Concerned about virus coming to the U.S.	66%	72	64	62
Concerned about getting the virus	41	45	36	41
Confident federal government can respond effectively	59	53	72	57

The World Health organization has confirmed 95 deaths from avian or bird flu since 2003. The virus has so far been found in China, as well as across Europe and Africa. People can contract the disease after coming into contact with infected birds, but it's feared that the virus is mutating and could become transmittable from person to person.

U.S. health officials recently authorized the development of a second vaccine for bird flu; the virus is believed to have mutated from the one on which the first vaccine was based.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone March 2-5, 2006, among a random national sample of 1,000 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-38 Previously released.

39. How likely do you think it is that the bird flu virus that's been found in other areas of the world will reach the United States - do you think it's very likely, somewhat likely, not so likely or not likely at all?

	-----Likely-----			-----Not Likely-----			
	Net	Very	Somewhat	Net	Not so	At all	No opinion
3/5/06	78	30	47	22	16	5	1

40. How concerned are you about the bird flu reaching the United States - very concerned, somewhat concerned, not so concerned or not concerned at all?

	-----Concerned-----			-----Not Concerned-----			
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	At all	No opinion
3/5/06	66	26	40	34	24	10	*

41. How concerned are you that you or someone in your immediate family might catch the bird flu - is that something that worries you a great deal, somewhat, not too much or not at all?

	----- Worried -----			----- Not worried -----			No
	NET	Great deal	Somewhat	NET	Not too	At all	opin.
3/5/06	41	13	28	59	36	23	*

SARS virus:

4/27/03	33	11	22	67	34	33	1
4/3/03	38	11	27	62	37	24	3

42. How confident you are in (ITEM's) ability to respond effectively to an outbreak of bird flu in the United States - very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident or not confident at all?

3/5/06 - Summary Table

	---- Confident --			--- Not confident ---			No
	NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not so	At all	op.
a. The federal government	59	16	44	40	25	15	*
b. Your local hospitals and health agencies	64	21	42	36	22	13	1

\*\*\*END\*\*\*