

chickenpox-like

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Ugly looking chickens or birds may be seen walking or flying around, with severe lesions that distort their faces, combs, wattles, beaks and other unfeathered parts of their body. They are the victims of pox virus, though occur in chickens, the disease is not chicken pox, but is known as fowl pox. The strange thing is chicken pox is found in humans but not in chickens. Although the crusted skin stage in human chicken pox appears somewhat like fowl pox in avian species, chicken pox in human is not to be confused as a pox virus infection, but actually due to herpesvirus.

Mosquitoes cause not only dengue fever but also serve as mechanical carriers for avian pox virus. The mature Avipoxvirus which belongs to the family of Poxviridae, appears as brick-shaped under electron microscope, and measures about 330 x 280 x 200 nm. There are many types of avian pox viruses and they tend to be specific to different species of birds. Fowl pox is a slow spreading viral disease of various avian species, characterized by cutaneous form (dry pox), which produces scabby encrusted lesions and diphtheritic form (wet pox). The wet pox produces yellowish diphtheritic lesions on the mucous membrane of the mouth, oesophagus, larynx and trachea, which result in respiratory distress and cause death. The mortality in cutaneous form is usually low. There is no treatment for the disease. Birds must be vaccinated as a preventive measure.

