

What To Know About Bird Flu

About Bird Flu

Bird flu is a disease caused by certain flu viruses that usually spreads between birds, not people. Infected birds can spread the virus through their mucous, saliva, or feces. People rarely get bird flu, but when they do, it's most often through direct unprotected (no gloves, protective wear, facemasks, respirators, or eye protection) contact with infected birds. People can become infected when virus is in the air by breathing in droplets or possibly dust, or by touching surfaces contaminated with their mucous, saliva, or feces and then touching their mouth or nose. Human illness from bird flu has ranged from no symptoms at all to severe illness, including death.

Types of Birds That Can be Sick with Bird Flu

Wild birds that can be infected with bird flu viruses include waterbirds, like ducks, geese and swans, and shorebirds, like storks. Bird flu can spread from wild birds to poultry, like chickens and turkeys. While most wild birds can be infected with bird flu viruses without being sick, poultry, like chickens and turkeys, can get very sick and die from certain bird flu viruses. If you have poultry, your birds can get bird flu if they have contact with infected wild birds or share food, water sources, and other environments with them. Most common songbirds or other birds found in the yard, like cardinals, robins, sparrows, blue jays, crows or pigeons, do not get infected with the bird flu viruses that can be dangerous to poultry or possibly spread to people.

Have You Had Contact with a Wild or Sick Bird?

If you have had contact with sick birds because you responded to a bird flu outbreak

If you have had close contact with sick birds or surfaces contaminated by them because you are responding to a bird flu outbreak as part of your job, your state or local health department should contact you. If you have not been contacted by your state or local health department after your exposure, contact them as soon as you can so they can help with monitoring your health. If you cannot reach your local or state health department, watch for the symptoms listed below in the meantime.

If you begin experiencing symptoms while you are still responding to a bird flu outbreak, contact your Safety Officer and let them know about your symptoms. Your Safety Officer will update your state or local health department about your illness.

If you have had close contact with sick birds because you hunt wild birds or have backyard poultry or other hobbyist bird flocks

If you have had close contact with sick birds or surfaces contaminated by them because you are a hunter or have backyard poultry or a hobbyist bird flock, contact your state or local health department . If you cannot reach your local or state health department, watch for the symptoms listed below in the meantime.

Your health department will decide how you should be monitored

This monitoring could include contacting you daily by phone, email, or text to ask about how you feel for 10 days after you were exposed. They may also ask you get tested for bird flu if you have symptoms. Please follow their instructions.

Your state or local health department will ask you to watch for these symptoms

During the 10 days after your exposure, you should watch for these symptoms:

- Fever (Temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater)
- Feeling feverish/chills*
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing/Shortness of breath
- Eye tearing, redness, or irritation
- Headaches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Diarrhea

*Fever may not always be present

It is important to watch for symptoms and follow your local or state health departments instructions even if your contact was short and you took safety measures. Report any symptoms to your state or local health department right away.

You May Be Prescribed Flu Antiviral Drugs

If you get sick after being in close contact with sick or potentially infected birds, a health care provider may write you a prescription for an antiviral drug to treat your illness. It's important to take the medication as directed as soon as possible.

Where to Find More Information:

Visit [Information on Avian Influenza](#) or [Información sobre la influenza aviar.](#)

Call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636); TTY: 888-232-6348



**Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention**
National Center for Immunization and
Respiratory Diseases