




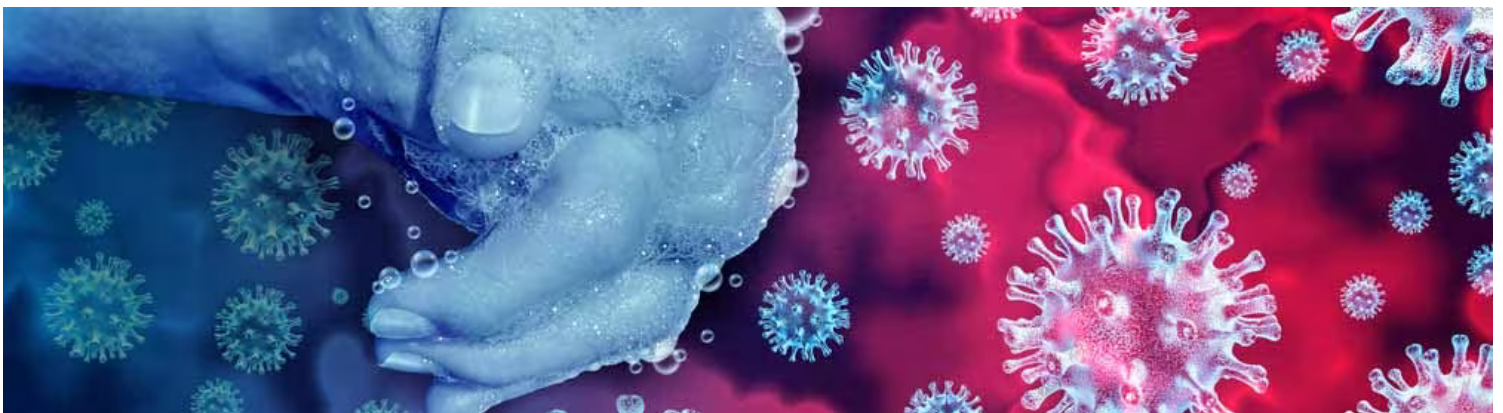
## Influenza (Flu)

[Influenza \(Flu\) Home](#)

# Prevention and Antiviral Treatment of Bird Flu Viruses in People

 CDC has developed new interim recommendations for prevention, monitoring, and public health investigations of highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1) virus in animals. Updates to this page are forthcoming.

[Recommendations](#)



CDC considers the current risk to the general public from the H5N1 bird flu outbreak in wild birds and poultry to be low. For information on the most recent bird flu developments specific to the United States, please visit the [Current Situation Summary](#) page.

## Protective actions around birds

- As a general precaution, whenever possible people should avoid direct contact with wild birds and observe them only from a distance.
- Wild birds can be infected with avian (bird) influenza (flu) A viruses even if they don't look sick.
- Avoid unprotected contact with domestic birds (poultry) that look sick or have died.
- Do not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with saliva, mucous, or feces from wild or domestic birds.

## The best prevention is to avoid sources of exposure

The best way to prevent avian (bird) influenza (flu) is to [avoid sources of exposure](#) whenever possible. Infected birds shed bird flu virus in their saliva, mucous, and feces. People rarely get bird flu; however, human infections with bird flu viruses



Minimize contact with wild birds or sick or dead poultry by wearing gloves and washing your hands with soap and water after touching birds. Wear respiratory protection, such as an N95 respirator if available or, if not available, a well-fitting facemask (e.g., a surgical mask).


can happen when enough virus gets into a person's eyes, nose or mouth, or is inhaled. This can happen when virus is in the air (in droplets or possibly dust) and a person breathes it in, or when a person touches something that has virus on it and then touches their mouth, eyes or nose. Bird flu virus infections in people happen most often after close, prolonged and unprotected (no gloves or other protective wear) contact with infected birds and then the person touches their mouth, eyes, or nose.

# Protective actions for people who come into contact with birds infected with bird flu because of their job


People who have job-related contact with birds should be aware of the risk of exposure to bird flu viruses and should take proper precautions. Groups of people who may have occupational exposure to infected birds include people who work at bird rehabilitation centers, people who work at bird and other animal sanctuaries, and [responders to bird flu outbreaks](#). If you must handle sick birds because of your job, take the following precautions:

- Use protective equipment like gloves, an N95 respirator if available or, if not available, a well-fitting facemask (e.g., a surgical mask), and eye protection.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after contact with birds or surfaces that may be contaminated with saliva, mucous, or feces from wild or domestic birds.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after touching birds, and
- Change your clothes before contact with healthy domestic poultry and after handling wild birds. Then, throw away the gloves and facemask, and wash your hands with soap and water.
- CDC has more information available on [what to do after you have been exposed](#) to infected poultry or other birds.


These actions will help protect you against infection with bird flu viruses and will also help to prevent you from spreading bird flu to other people, birds, and animals.

CDC has information [available](#)  [256 KB, 2 pages] if you have had direct contact with infected birds and you become sick.

## Information for other groups who may come into contact with infected birds

Other groups of people who may have contact with birds infected with bird flu viruses include hunters and people who have [backyard or hobbyist flocks](#). Bird owners should report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to the state or the federal government, either through their state veterinarian or by calling USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593. Find additional information on biosecurity for backyard flocks on [USDA's APHIS website](#) .

### Hunters

Hunters who handle wild birds should dress game birds in the field when possible and practice good hygiene to prevent any potential disease spread. If possible, wear gloves, an N95 respirator if available or, if not available, a well-fitting facemask (e.g., a surgical mask), and eye protection when dressing birds. Afterwards, throw away the gloves and facemask and then wash your hands with soap and water. More information on [general safety guidelines for hunters handling wildlife and their tissues](#)  is available from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's website.

## Bird owners and People who have Backyard or Hobbyist Flocks

Bird owners should practice good biosecurity and prevent contact between their birds and wild birds. Bird owners should follow the protective actions around birds listed at the top of this page. If you must handle sick birds, take the following precautions:


- Use protective equipment like gloves, an N95 respirator if available or, if not available, a well-fitting facemask (e.g., a

surgical mask), and eye protection,

- Wash your hands with soap and water after touching birds,
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after contact with birds or surfaces that may be contaminated with saliva, mucous, or feces from wild or domestic birds.
- Change your clothes before contact with healthy domestic poultry and handling wild birds, captive wild birds, farmed birds, and other pet birds. Then, throw away the gloves and facemask, and wash your hands with soap and water.
- CDC has more information available on [what to do after you have been exposed](#) to infected poultry or other birds.


Specific recommendations regarding the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to wear and how to safely put it on and take it off are available at [Backyard Flock Owners: Take Steps to Protect Yourself from Avian Influenza \(Bird Flu\)](#).

## If you've had direct contact with birds infected with bird flu virus and become sick

CDC has [information available](#)  [256 KB, 2 pages] for different groups of people who become sick after contact with infected birds.

People who become sick within 10 days of their exposure to infected birds should isolate at home away from their household members and should not go to work or school until they are proven not to have bird flu virus infection and have recovered from their illness. The local or state public health department should be notified and can assist in monitoring and advising when isolation is no longer required.

Close contacts (family members, etc.) of people who have been exposed to bird flu viruses should monitor their health and report to their health care provider any new symptoms, especially respiratory symptoms, within 10 days of the exposure.

For more information about bird flu and what to do if you have been exposed to bird flu, visit: [What To Know About Bird Flu \(cdc.gov\)](#)  [154 KB, 2 Pages].

## CDC also recommends that everyone 6 months and older get a seasonal flu vaccine every year.

It is especially important that people who may have exposure to sick birds get a seasonal flu vaccine, ideally 2 weeks before their potential exposure, if possible. Seasonal flu vaccination will not prevent infection with bird flu viruses but can reduce the risk of getting sick with human and bird flu viruses at the same time.

## What to do if you find a dead bird

State and local governments have different policies for collecting and testing birds, so check with your state health department, state veterinary diagnostic laboratory, or state wildlife agency for information about reporting dead birds in your area. Wildlife agencies regularly investigate sick or dead bird events if large numbers are impacted. This type of reporting could help with the early detection of illnesses like West Nile virus or bird flu. If local authorities tell you to throw away the bird's carcass (body), don't touch it with your bare hands. Use gloves or a plastic bag turned inside out to place the body in a garbage bag, which can then be thrown away in your regular trash. To report unusual signs in birds you have seen in the wild, call 1-866-536-7593.



It is safe to eat properly handled and cooked poultry in the United States. The proper handling and cooking of poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F kills bacteria and viruses, including bird flu viruses.

## Preparing food

The U.S. poultry industry has strict health and safety standards, including regular monitoring for bird flu. It is safe to eat properly handled and cooked poultry in the United States. Properly handling and cooking poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165°F kills bacteria and viruses, including bird flu viruses. People should handle raw poultry hygienically and cook all poultry and poultry products (including eggs) all the way before eating. Eating uncooked or undercooked poultry can make you sick. More information is available at [Chicken and Food Poisoning](#).

While there is no evidence that anyone has gotten bird flu after eating properly cooked poultry products, uncooked poultry and poultry products (like blood) could have been the source of a small number of bird flu virus infections in people in Southeast Asia. Visit [USDA - Food Safety Education](#) [🔗](#) for instructions on handling poultry safely.

## Traveling to other countries

Currently, CDC does not recommend against [travel](#) to any countries due to bird flu viruses in wild birds, poultry, or people. CDC recommends that travelers to countries and states with bird flu outbreaks in poultry or people:

- Do not visit poultry farms, bird markets, or other places where live poultry are raised, kept, or sold, if possible.
- Do not eat raw or undercooked poultry products and wash your hands after touching uncooked poultry.

- Practice good hygiene and cleanliness.
- Visit a doctor if you become sick during or after travel.

Visit [CDC Travelers' Health](#) for more information on [avian influenza](#).

## Antiviral Drugs Can Be Used to Treat Illness

CDC currently recommends treatment as soon as possible with flu antiviral drugs for people who get sick with bird flu. Antiviral treatment works best when started as soon as symptoms begin. If you get sick after being in close contact with sick or potentially infected birds, contact your state or local health department and a health care provider right away. They may have you get tested for bird flu and 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.

Available data on bird flu viruses spreading worldwide suggest that most bird flu virus infections can be treated with current flu antiviral drugs, if treatment is started early after symptoms begin. However, some evidence shows flu antiviral drugs may not work as well against some A(H5N1) and A(H7N9) bird flu viruses that were first detected in Asia. When flu viruses evolve in ways that make antiviral treatment less effective, this is called antiviral resistance. CDC regularly tests bird flu viruses for antiviral resistance.

## The U.S. Government is Developing A(H5N1) and A(H7N9) Bird Flu Vaccines in Case they are Needed

The U.S. federal government maintains a stockpile of vaccines, including vaccines against A(H5N1) and A(H7N9) bird flu viruses. These vaccines could be used if similar viruses were to begin spreading easily from person to person. Since flu viruses change constantly, CDC continues to make candidate vaccine viruses (CVVs) as needed. Creating a CVV is the first step in producing a flu vaccine. More information about [Making a candidate Vaccine Virus \(CVV\) for a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(Bird Flu\) Virus](#) is available.

If you're a clinician, laboratorian, or public health worker

[Avian Influenza: Information for Health Professionals and Laboratorians](#) for the latest guidance.



**Bird Flu in People**  
 More information is available from the bird flu in people webpage.




**Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) Type A Viruses**  
 Learn more about avian influenza (bird flu) Type A viruses.

**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.

**Selected Images of Birds that Can be Infected with Bird Flu**




**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.

 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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This handout contains guidance for people exposed to birds with

 [PDF - 265 KB, 2 Pages]

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