

What to Know and Do About H5N1 Bird Flu

H5N1 bird flu is a viral disease that primarily infects poultry (e.g., chickens, turkeys, ducks) and other wild birds. It is particularly contagious in bird populations. Rarely, it can cause illness or death in people. There is currently no evidence of person-to-person spread of H5N1 bird flu.

While there is currently no evidence of person-to-person spread of bird flu and the number of cases in people is very low, bird flu can be very serious and even life-threatening. Anyone who works with animals should be particularly careful to protect their health.

Symptoms and Spread in Humans

- H5N1 bird flu spreads when enough virus gets into a person's eyes, nose, or mouth or is inhaled from an infected bird or animal.
- [H5N1 bird flu symptoms in humans](#) are similar to the seasonal flu virus. Possible symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, eye infections, difficulty breathing, pneumonia, and severe respiratory disease.

Protecting Yourself from H5N1 Bird Flu

- **For the general public:** While the risk of H5N1 bird flu to the general public is currently low, everyone should take the following precautions:
 - Avoid contact with poultry, wild birds, livestock, and dairy cattle.
 - Avoid contact with animals that appear ill or are dead.
 - Avoid contact with surfaces that may have been contaminated with animal feces.
 - Avoid eating uncooked or undercooked poultry, meat, and eggs.
 - Drink pasteurized milk, which has been treated to kill harmful bacteria.
 - Cook poultry, meat, and eggs to the right [internal temperature](#) to kill bacteria and viruses, including H5N1 viruses.
 - Wash your hands and surfaces thoroughly before and after handling poultry, meat, and eggs.
- **For agricultural workers and backyard farmers:** If you have sustained contact with poultry, dairy cattle, or livestock, take the following actions to minimize the risk of H5N1 bird flu exposure for yourself, your team, and the people in your community:
 - [Learn how to properly put on, wear, remove, and reuse or dispose of personal protective equipment \(PPE\).](#)



- Do not touch sick or dead birds, their feces or litter, or any potentially contaminated water sources without wearing PPE.
- After contact with birds and other animals, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Wash your work clothing, and do not wear your work clothing at home.

H5N1 Bird Flu Treatment

- If you have had contact with infected birds, infected animals, or their contaminated environments, monitor for H5N1 bird flu symptoms (listed above) for 10 days after your last exposure. If you develop symptoms, talk to a healthcare provider. Seasonal flu tests can also detect H5N1 bird flu and help determine the best course of treatment.