

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Information Sheet

Nebraska State Health Department Phone Number: 402-471-2937

What to Know About Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

About bird flu:

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) also known as the bird flu, is caused by influenza type A strains. The current H5N1 subtype in North America has had a large impact on the poultry industry, led to significant mortality events in wild birds, and has crossed over into terrestrial and aquatic mammals. Waterfowl are currently the primary reservoirs for avian influenza viruses but have not yet been identified as the primary source of the viral transmission in domestic poultry. Major contributing factors of the spread of this virus include the movement of infected birds and contaminated equipment, which is why proactive measures to prevent the spread to unaffected areas are critical. HPAI is a zoonotic disease, however the risk to the general public remains low. However, individuals working in environments where they may be exposed to infected birds often face higher risk. Therefore, it is important to implement strong biosafety practices to minimize exposure.

If you had close contact with sick or dying wild birds:

If you are aware of sick or dying birds in the area, you should avoid that area and avoid contact with them. However, if you do come into close contact with sick or dying wild birds you should take these precautions:

- Wear personal-protective equipment including disposable gloves, preferably double-gloved if handling carcasses, mask, eye protection, and rubber/waterproof boots (disinfect after use) or boot covers.
- Clean and process birds outdoors. Do not harvest or handle birds that appear sick or are dead.
- Double bag dead carcass and properly dispose; don't leave carcass behind for animals to scavenge.
- Wash your hand immediately after cleaning or handling birds.
- Disinfect all equipment, including hunting gear.
- Do not let pets, poultry, or other domestic animals near sick or dead birds. If such contact occurs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Your local health department may reach out for symptom monitoring if you were exposed to birds infected with avian influenza. If there is a case of 5 or more dead birds or a suspected mammal avian influenza event, please report said event by completing the avian influenza form on the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission website (QR code to the right) and contact Wildlife Health Program Manager Marnee Roundtree marnee.roundtree@nebraska.gov:



If you become symptomatic after contact with sick or dying wild birds:

During the 10 days after your last exposure to sick or dying birds, you should watch for the symptoms listed below. Should you develop any of these symptoms, please notify your local health department (QR code bottom right) immediately so they may assist you in providing testing and treatment recommendations.

- Fever (Temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater) or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough or sore throat
- Eye tearing, redness, or irritation
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath
- Headaches, muscle aches, or body aches
- Diarrhea

Find your local
health department:

