

Avian Influenza & Your Health

January 2023



How is avian influenza spread to humans?

Birds infected with avian influenza shed the virus in their saliva, mucous, and feces. While infection with avian influenza in people is very rare, people can become infected if the virus gets into a person's eyes, nose, or mouth, or if it is breathed in. You may have been exposed to avian influenza if you had contact with live or dead birds infected with avian influenza. Additionally, exposure could occur through contact with surfaces contaminated with infected bird droppings or body fluids, or if you were in a closed space (like a henhouse) with infected birds.

What if I've had contact with a bird infected with avian influenza?

If avian influenza is confirmed in your flock or in a wild or domestic bird you had contact with, a public health official will contact you to follow-up. This type of follow-up is important to diagnose any infections quickly for appropriate treatment and to prevent the disease from further spreading.

How can I protect myself and my family from avian influenza?

You should avoid unprotected contact with ill birds or birds that have died. Don't touch surfaces that may be contaminated with saliva, mucous, or feces from birds. If avian influenza is suspected or confirmed in your flock, you should avoid direct contact with infected birds and contaminated surfaces.

If avian influenza is confirmed in your flock, wait 120 days before cleaning the area where infected birds were housed. After 120 days have passed, the area can be cleaned using basic precautions such as wearing gloves, wearing a mask, washing your hands with soap and water after removing your gloves, and keeping used supplies (cleaning supplies, coop equipment and boots) outside of the house.

What are the symptoms of avian influenza in humans?

Fever or chills	Cough	Runny or stuffy nose	Eye tearing, redness, or irritation
Sneezing	Sore throat	Trouble breathing	Shortness of breath
Fatigue (feeling very tired)	Muscle or body aches	Headaches	Nausea
Vomiting	Diarrhea	Seizures	Rash

What should I do if I have symptoms after a possible exposure to avian influenza?

If you have any questions or symptoms of concern, call your local health department immediately. If you need to seek medical treatment, call your healthcare provider in advance to let them know about your possible exposure to avian influenza prior to arriving in-person.

If you have already been contacted by a local public health official, follow the guidance provided. If you are still waiting on the test results of the birds you were in contact with, or if a public health official has not yet contacted you, contact your local health department and let them know about your contact with ill birds. You can find contact information for your [local health department here](#) or alternatively, call 206-418-5500 and ask for the contact information for your local health department.

Emergency Mental Health Resources:

Animal health emergencies can cause stress. If you notice changes in your emotions or thinking, or if it is more difficult for you to care for yourself, your family, or your animals, consider turning to a friend, clergy member, or medical provider. If a situation could be life-threatening, get immediate emergency help by dialing 9-1-1.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

If you have depression, have suicidal thoughts, or just need to talk to someone, contact one of these groups:

Farm Aid: Farm Aid connects farmers with helpful services and resources. Fill out an [online request for assistance](#), call the farmer hotline between Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern standard time at 1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243), or email farm-help@farmaid.org.

Washington County Crisis Hotlines: You can call your [local county crisis line](#) to request assistance for you or a friend or family member. This service is operational 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Washington Listens: Washington Listens is a free, anonymous service for anyone in the state. Washington Listens provides support to people who feel sad, anxious, or stressed and can be reached by dialing 1-833-681-0211.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: The national suicide prevention lifeline offers free and confidential crisis resources for you or your loved ones. Dial 9-8-8 or 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).



Contact :

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360-236-3642