

ARE YOU READY?

What is H5N1 bird flu?

Bird flu, also known as “avian influenza,” is a virus that usually makes birds sick. However, the H5N1 bird flu can affect other animals as well as people.

Why is H5N1 significant?

Widespread. H5N1 is common in wild birds, which allows it to spread across the world. It has been found in Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States.

Contagious. New types of animals are getting sick, such as farm animals and pets.

Deadly. While few people have been infected, half of those who get the virus die.



How and when does H5N1 spread?

The virus spreads through raw (unpasteurized) milk and bodily fluids such as spit, mucus and feces.

The spread of H5N1 is higher during cold weather, so cases rise in October and peak in February. The lowest risk period is in September.

What are the symptoms of H5N1 infection in people?

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Cough and stuffy/runny nose
- Nausea/vomiting
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath
- Pink eye

Who is at risk of getting bird flu?



- People who work with or own farm animals, especially birds.
- People who drink raw milk or eat raw dairy products.
- People who get sick easily because of other underlying health conditions.

How can I prevent bird flu infection?

Do:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before and after working with animals or preparing raw food.
- Avoid sick or dead animals that may have bird flu.
- Keep your pets away from sick or dead animals.
- Wear personal protective equipment when working with animals:
 - Gloves
 - Aprons
 - Boots
 - Face shields and/or face masks
 - Hair net/cover
 - Safety goggles

Do Not:

- Drink raw milk or other raw dairy products.
- Eat raw or undercooked food.



What do I do if I've been in contact with an infected animal?

- Report sick animals or unusual animal deaths to your state department of natural resources or the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Contact your state or local health department if you have had contact with a sick animal.
- Watch for symptoms for 10 days after contact with the sick animal. Report any symptoms to your state or local health department.

Where can I get more information?



The following resources offer credible, science-based information on bird flu:

Harvard's primer on bird flu: health.harvard.edu/blog/a-bird-flu-primer-what-to-know-and-do-202405083039

CDC's latest bird flu updates: cdc.gov/bird-flu/

Cleveland Clinic's bird flu symptoms: my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22401-bird-flu

CDC bird flu resources:

cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/index.html

cdc.gov/flu/pdf/avianflu/protect-yourself-h5n1.pdf

cdc.gov/bird-flu/situation-summary/current-bird-flu-situation-in-poultry.html