

Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can people get bird flu?

A: Yes, people can get bird flu from infected animals, however, it is rare. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the risk of the general population getting bird flu is low.

Q: How can people get bird flu?

A: Bird flu is spread through the saliva, mucous or feces of infected birds or animals. Most people who get bird flu have...

1. come into direct, prolonged contact with infected birds (sick wild birds or sick or dead poultry);
2. been exposed to heavily contaminated environments; or
3. have slaughtered and prepared infected birds for food.

Q: How can I protect myself and my family from bird flu?

A: General precautions include:

1. Wash hands with soap and water (or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available) after contact with animals;
2. Avoid contact with birds that appear to be sick or are dead;
3. Wash hands frequently when preparing food;
4. Cook eggs and meat to the [safe minimum internal temperature](#) and wash all utensils and food prep areas with soap and hot water;
5. Do not consume any raw milk or raw milk products; only consume milk or milk products that have been pasteurized;
6. Owners of domestic livestock, including cows and poultry, and waterfowl, should contact their veterinarian if any of their animals appear sick;
7. Hunters should hunt and process only healthy-looking animals, wear gloves when handling animals, clean and disinfect any equipment used for cleaning game, and cook game thoroughly.

Q: Is it safe to eat poultry and eggs?

A: Yes. There is no evidence that properly cooked poultry or eggs can be a source of infection from avian influenza. Poultry should be cooked to an internal temperature of 165°. Raw eggs should be cooked until the yolk and whites are firm.

Q: Should we stop feeding birds at backyard bird feeders?

A: It is not necessary to stop feeding wild backyard birds. It is always best to use gloves when handling sick or dead birds, handling/cleaning up bird droppings, or touching surfaces/items contaminated by bird droppings. ALWAYS wash your hands with soap and water.

Q: Should I feed wild ducks, geese and other waterfowl?

A: No. There are many reasons not to feed ducks and geese though. Feeding ducks and geese increases the chance of spreading many diseases common among waterfowl, including avian influenza. It makes them more likely to approach humans and may cause them to become a nuisance as they lose their natural behaviors. Unnatural food items such as bread, popcorn, and seeds have little nutritional value and can make birds sick. Enjoying your local wildlife from a distance and under natural conditions is best!

For additional information and resources, go to:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov>

<https://cdc.gov/bird-flu/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/groups/index.html>

<https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/zoonotic-disease-program/diseases/hpai>

[Confirmations of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Commercial and Backyard Flocks | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#)

