

Avian Influenza Information for General Public



Hunters can visit [NC DHHS' Information for Hunters](#) for specific recommendations.

Backyard poultry flock owners can visit [NCD&CS's Protect Your Flock](#) for specific recommendations.

Avian influenza, or “bird flu,” is a disease caused by influenza A viruses that usually spread between wild and domestic birds. Avian flu spreads between birds through direct contact and can infect other animals in the wild and on farms. In rare cases, humans can become sick after being in contact with an infected animal. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have determined that the current risk to the general public is low, the following recommendations can help protect you from avian flu.

What to do to protect yourself

- People should avoid direct contact with sick or dead wild birds, poultry and other animals, and observe them only from a distance.



- If you must have close contact with live birds or other animals that are infected or potentially infected with avian flu, wear recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) including mask, eye protection and gloves.
- To dispose of a dead bird or animal, wear disposable gloves, use a plastic bag or use a shovel to pick up the animal and place it into a garbage bag. Tie this bag and place it into a second garbage bag. Tie off the second garbage bag and then place it in the trash.

- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water.

- Avoid touching surfaces or materials (e.g., animal litter or bedding material) contaminated with saliva, mucus or feces from sick wild or domestic birds or other animals.

- Bird feeders and baths should be thoroughly cleaned with bleach on a regular basis and should not be placed where they would encourage wild birds to co-mingle with backyard poultry or rehabilitation animals.

- Do not touch or consume raw milk or raw milk products.
- Cook game meat, poultry, and eggs thoroughly; internal temperature should reach 165°F.

REMEMBER:

Birds can be infected with avian flu even if they don't appear sick.

Monitor for symptoms

It is important to watch for symptoms if you have been around a sick bird or wild animal.

Symptoms may include:

- Red eyes/conjunctivitis
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Diarrhea
- Rash
- Fatigue
- Vomiting
- Sore muscles
- Headache
- Nausea
- Seizures



How can I report sick or dead birds?



Reports of sick/injured wildlife can be made to the **NC Wildlife Resource Commission's Helpline**, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at 1-866-318-2401 or anytime via email at HWI@ncwildlife.org.

If you feel sick after contact with birds

Please contact your health care provider or local health department. Tell your provider about any recent animal contact. In case of emergency, call 911.