



National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)



JUNE 27, 2024

CDC's website is being modified to comply with President Trump's Executive Orders.

Avian Flu in the Workplace

KEY POINTS

- Avian influenza, also called bird flu, is a disease caused by infection with avian influenza A viruses.
- Bird flu viruses do not normally infect humans.
- However, the disease can infect unprotected people who work with infected animals, or contaminated materials or surfaces.
- This page provides information for people with exposure to wild or domesticated birds.



Overview

Current Situation

This page focuses on protecting people with exposure to **wild or domesticated birds**. If you're looking for information on the ongoing multi-state outbreak, please **view the [current situation summary](#)**.



Infected birds shed virus in their saliva, mucous, and feces. Human infections with bird flu viruses are rare.

Workers can get infected if they breathe in virus in the air. They can also get infected if they touch something with virus on it and then touch their mouth, eyes, or nose. People may be exposed to the virus if they work with:

- Infected wild birds or poultry that are sick or dead
- Infected birds' droppings
- Contaminated litter
- Contaminated materials or surfaces like egg collection containers

At-risk populations

Workers at risk

- Broiler breeder farms, hatcheries, grow-out farms, and processing plant workers
- Layer farm workers
- Turkey farm workers
- Disease control and eradication workers (federal, contract, and company workers)
- Live-bird market workers
- Wildlife biologists who handle birds
- Animal control, welfare, and rescue workers who handle infected animals

Areas at risk

Outbreaks occur occasionally around the world. Outbreaks in poultry were associated with illness and death in humans in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Pacific, and the Near East. While very rare, some bird flu viruses caused illness in humans in North America.

Keep Reading:

[Transmission of Avian Influenza A Viruses Between Animals and People](#)

Prevention

Resource



Poultry workers should take steps to protect themselves from avian influenza. The [NIOSH Alert: Protecting Poultry Workers from Avian Influenza](#) provides recommendations for workers and is available in English, Spanish, and French.

Infections typically happen after someone has close, prolonged and unprotected contact with infected birds and touches their mouth, eyes, or nose. Unprotected contact means no gloves or other personal protective equipment (PPE). Anyone likely to have exposure to bird flu viruses should take protective measures.

Keep Reading:

[Reducing Risk for People Working with or Exposed to Animals](#)

Resources

Additional resources

[Information from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#)

[Antimicrobial Products Registered for Disinfection Use against Avian Influenza on Poultry Farms and Other Facilities](#)

[Carcass Management During Avian Influenza Outbreaks](#)

[Defend the Flock](#)

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:

[National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#)