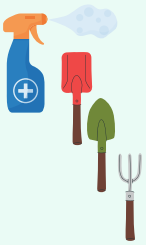
KEEP YOUR BACKYARD FLOCKS HEALTHY

Diseases like bird flu, *Campylobacter* infection, *E. coli* infection, histoplasmosis, and *Salmonella* infection can spread in backyard poultry. Backyard poultry includes birds like chickens, ducks, geese, guinea fowl, and turkeys. Children younger than 5 years old should not handle or touch chicks, ducklings, or other poultry. Young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to get sick from the germs poultry may have, even if they appear healthy. Follow the steps below to reduce your risk of illness and to keep you and your flock healthy.

WASH YOUR HANDS

- Wash your hands with soap and running water after touching backyard poultry, eggs, equipment or supplies in the area where your birds live and roam.
- Adults should help young children wash their hands thoroughly.

KEEP IT CLEAN



- Clean shoes, tools, and equipment outside after working with your flock. Do not bring these items inside.
- Regularly clean and disinfect equipment, coops, and other poultry enclosures. Wear work or utility gloves when cleaning droppings and cages.
- Don't share tools and poultry equipment with neighbors.

LIMIT CONTACT BETWEEN YOUR FLOCK AND OTHER BIRDS AND VISITORS

- Keep outdoor feeding areas covered and enclosed. Keep feed, drinking water, equipment, and other supplies secure and out of reach of wild birds and rodents.
- Keep areas where backyard birds are kept fully enclosed, away from wild birds and their droppings.
- Limit travel with your birds to sales and fairs.
- Limit how many people handle your birds. If other people need to handle your birds:
  - ✓ Make sure they're not sick and have not been exposed to any sick birds or animals.
  - ✓ Have them wash their hands before and after handling your birds.
  - ✓ Make sure they are wearing clean clothes and footwear.

KNOW THE SIGNS WHEN YOUR BIRDS ARE SICK

- These include:
  - ✓ Eating or drinking less than normal
  - ✓ Ruffled feathers
  - ✓ Runny diarrhea
  - ✓ Discharge from the eyes or nose or difficulty breathing
  - ✓ Producing fewer eggs than normal
  - ✓ Producing discolored, irregular, or misshapen eggs
  - ✓ Dying unexpectedly of no apparent cause

- Wear personal protection equipment (like a mask, gloves, safety goggles, boots, and dedicated clothing) around sick or dead birds.
- Call your veterinarian if your birds show signs of illness or you suspect exposure to other sick birds or animals.
  - ✓ If you do not have a veterinarian, call your local extension agent (ext.vt.edu/offices).
  - ✓ Report unusual poultry illnesses or deaths to the State Veterinarian's Office at 804-692-0601 or at vastatevet@vdacs.virginia.gov or call the USDA toll-free at 866-536-7593.

- If your birds are suspected of having bird flu, contact your local health district for guidance to protect and monitor your health. Find your LHD at virginia.gov/health-department-locator/

For more information, visit these websites:

- VDH Bird Flu Website: vdh.virginia.gov/hpai
- CDC Backyard Poultry: cdc.gov/healthy-pets/about/backyard-poultry.html

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VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH