

# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BIRD FLU



Birds, cows, and other animals can be infected with bird flu. Bird flu infections in people are rare, but can happen after being in close contact with infected animals. The following steps can help protect you and your family from getting sick with bird flu.



## Wash your hands after touching birds and other animals.

- ▶ Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- ▶ Adults should help young children wash their hands thoroughly.



## Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products. Cook raw meat and eggs to the proper temperature for the appropriate length of time. This goes for you and your pets.

- ▶ Consuming raw, unpasteurized milk and raw dairy products can lead to serious health risks.
- ▶ Pasteurization kills disease-causing germs, including the bird flu virus, by heating milk to a high temperature.
- ▶ Pets can also become ill from eating raw or undercooked pet food and raw milk contaminated with bird flu virus and other disease-causing germs. Talk with your veterinarian for recommendations about feeding your pet.



## Avoid contact with sick or dead wild birds, poultry, and other animals.

- ▶ People who work around sick or dead wild birds, poultry, and other animals should wear personal protective equipment. Wash hands after handling birds or other animals.
- ▶ People should report clusters of sick or dead wild birds or other wild animals to the Virginia Wildlife Conflict Helpline at 855-571-9003.



## People with backyard flocks should take steps to keep their flock healthy.

- ▶ Wash hands with soap and water before and after touching backyard poultry, collecting eggs, and handling any items or equipment in their environment.
- ▶ Prevent germs from spreading by regularly cleaning and disinfecting coops, tools, and equipment. Do not bring these items indoors.
- ▶ Keep areas where backyard birds are kept fully enclosed, away from wild birds and their droppings.
- ▶ Wear dedicated clothing and shoes/boots that are only used for the poultry area and remove them prior to entering the home.
- ▶ Call your veterinarian if your birds show signs of illness.
  - If you do not have a veterinarian, call your local extension agent ([ext.vt.edu/offices](http://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](mailto:vastatevet@vdacs.virginia.gov) or call the USDA's toll-free number 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 [vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator/](http://vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator/)