



AVIAN INFLUENZA INFORMATION FOR THOSE WITH WILD BIRD AND MAMMAL CONTACT

If you have close contact with animals suspected of avian influenza infection, precautions should be taken to protect your health and the health of other animals you have contact with.







Avian influenza virus has been causing illness and death in wild birds and many wild terrestrial and aquatic mammal species in the U.S. In **March 2024**, avian flu was first detected in ill dairy cattle in other states. In Virginia, avian flu has been detected in several species of waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors; especially vultures. Avian flu has also caused sporadic illness and deaths in Virginia red foxes. Some affected mammals, including foxes, may be found dead or have neurologic symptoms similar to rabies.

The current risk of avian flu to the general U.S. population is low. People exposed to infected animals, including through contaminated surfaces or fluids, are at greater risk of becoming infected with avian flu.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MINIMIZE EXPOSURE TO AVIAN INFLUENZA

If handling wild birds or mammals, take the following precautions.

- ▶ Wear personal protective equipment (PPE), including:
 -  Gloves
 -  N95 respirator or well-fitted mask that fits snugly around the mouth and nose
 -  Safety goggles
 -  Dedicated clothing and rubber boots
- ▶ Launder clothing immediately after use and disinfect footwear with a 10% bleach solution.
- ▶ Change into clean clothes prior to leaving the site or prior to entering your home to avoid spreading the virus.
- ▶ Wash hands immediately after handling animals with soap and water, if available. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used until hands can be washed.

HUMAN EXPOSURE AND HEALTH MONITORING



- ▶ If you have been exposed to sick or dead birds suspected of infection with avian flu (regardless of PPE worn):

- **Monitor for new influenza-like symptoms** (e.g., fever, body aches, respiratory illness) and red or itchy eyes (conjunctivitis) for 10 days after your exposure.
- **Call your local health department and healthcare provider if you develop any symptoms described above within 10 days of contact with sick or dead birds.**
 - » Testing for avian flu and treatment with antiviral medications may be necessary.
 - » It is important to remind your healthcare provider of your exposure to birds or other animals.



- ▶ **Mammals with avian flu** can appear similar to mammals with rabies. Both can cause neurologic illness. Animal laboratory testing is needed to tell the difference.



- ▶ If you have been exposed to sick or dead mammals suspected of infection with avian flu (or rabies), **call your local health department** so they can assess your risk of exposure.
 - They will provide guidance for avian influenza symptom monitoring and testing and make recommendations regarding whether post-exposure medication or animal testing for rabies is needed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ◆ [Virginia Department of Health - Avian Influenza](#)
- ◆ [Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources - Avian Influenza](#)
- ◆ [Local Health Department Locator](#)
- ◆ [USDA Detection of Avian Influenza in Mammals](#)
- ◆ [CDC Facts About Diseases that Can Spread Between Animals and People](#)

