

# What *Workers* Should Know About Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

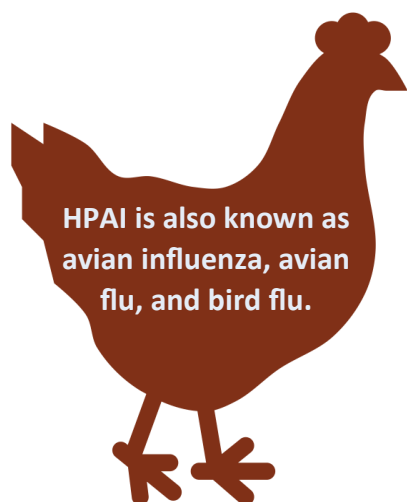


**Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza spreads mainly among domesticated and wild birds.**

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is a disease caused by avian influenza Type A virus.

The virus spreads through the saliva, mucous, and feces of infected birds.

Bird products, such as eggs and uncooked poultry, and bird carcasses can also spread the virus.



**The risk of humans getting avian flu is low, but infections have happened among highly exposed individuals.**

People who work or live around domestic poultry, and others who might have direct contact with wild birds or poultry could be at risk of exposure to avian flu, like hunters or bird enthusiasts. Unprotected contact with infected birds or bird product increases the risk of human avian flu infection. If the virus gets in the eyes, nose, or mouth, or is inhaled via dust or droplets, humans may get sick. Contact with contaminated surfaces can also spread avian flu from birds to humans.

**If human illness from avian flu is rare, why is it important that I protect against it?**

- Past outbreaks of avian influenza caused severe illness and death in some people, particularly poultry workers and others who were highly exposed to the virus without protection.
- It is possible that the virus can mutate and increase its ability to spread from bird to human and from human to human more often and more quickly.



**Flip for more info!**

## Know the possible signs and symptoms of avian influenza infection in humans.

The early signs and symptoms of avian flu are similar to those of seasonal flu. Laboratory testing is required to diagnose someone with avian flu.



Fever  
(Temperature of  
100°F [37.8°C])



Sore throat



Runny or  
stuffy nose



Eye irritation



Body aches



Fatigue



Shortness of  
breath



Headaches

## How can I protect against avian influenza?



Get the current season's influenza vaccine to reduce the possibility of dual infection with avian and human influenza viruses.



Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when in direct contact with potentially infected birds or bird products. PPE includes:



Properly-fitted  
unvented or indirectly  
vented safety goggles.



Boots or boot  
covers.



NIOSH-approved  
respirators, like an  
N95 mask.



Disposable gloves.



Disposable  
fluid-resistant coveralls  
and hair/head covers.



Put on and remove PPE in a clean area, separate from sick birds and bird products.



Ensure reusable PPE (rubber boots and rubber aprons) are cleaned and disinfected by EPA-approved disinfectants with a label with claims against Influenza A viruses.



Avoid unprotected direct contact with sick birds, poultry carcasses, feces or litter, and water that may be contaminated with sick bird excretions.

**It is important to take actions to protect yourself from the virus while working with birds and bird products, even if an outbreak has not been detected at your worksite.**

Ask your employer if they have a site-specific biosecurity plan that contains rules and procedures to help keep employees and birds healthy.

## What happens if there is an outbreak of avian flu among birds in the workplace?



The health department contacts the worker to set up self-monitoring and provide needed PPE.



While continuing to work on-site, the worker self-monitors for symptoms of avian flu.



The employer will be instructed on how to prevent the spread of the virus to workers.



If a worker has symptoms, they should contact the health department immediately. They may be directed to get tested.



If no symptoms develop, the worker ends self-monitoring after 10 days of being away from the infected site.

### What is self-monitoring?

Self-monitoring is checking yourself for signs and symptoms of an illness and reporting your observations to the public health department.

### Who should self-monitor?

Anyone who worked on or near the affected premises in direct contact with birds or bird products from **3 days prior to the first bird illness until all birds are removed** and the area is disinfected.

### Why is self-monitoring important?

Self-monitoring helps prevent the spread of bird flu between humans, even though it is rare. It enables public health officials to connect you to testing, medical care, and other resources to help you and prevent further spread of the disease.





## What to do when I self-monitor?

Self-monitoring should be done **once per day**. Complete self-monitoring **daily** while working at the infected site, until 10 days after the site has been disinfected.



Do a daily temperature check for fever.



Be alert for flu-like symptoms.



Provide daily updates about symptoms to the public health department.

## What happens if I get sick?

If you have severe symptoms, go to a hospital or call your doctor immediately and tell them you are being monitored for avian influenza.

If you get sick during the monitoring period:

- Call your local health department so they can help you set up avian influenza testing.
- Stay home from work and avoid contact with others until the test results are back.

If the test results are positive for avian influenza, advice will be given on next steps.

## Who will collect my self-monitoring information?

Your local health department will contact you to set up self-monitoring.

*They will:*

- Explain the importance of self-monitoring.
- Give you the option to self-monitor using a daily text or email.
- Answer your questions about self-monitoring and avian influenza.

*They will ask you to provide your:*

- Name.
- Home address.
- Phone number.
- Email address.

## Who will have access to my personal information?

Names, addresses, and contact information of employees obtained by public health are considered **protected health information**. It will never be used for regulatory action against a business or employee. This confidentiality is required by state and federal law. **Symptoms or test results you report as a part of self-monitoring will be confidential and only shared with your employer and the public health department as needed to prevent the spread of the disease.**

### For more information visit:

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/influenza/avian.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/influenza/avian.htm)

[www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian)

[www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm)

[www.osha.gov/avian-flu](http://www.osha.gov/avian-flu)

