

Avian Flu Animal Handlers (Not Poultry Workers)

Avian flu is a viral disease and it can be very contagious and even deadly in poultry (e.g., chickens, turkeys, ducks). Of great concern are the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) viruses (e.g., H5N1, H7N9) that have killed millions of birds and infected humans in other countries. If avian flu viruses are detected in the U.S., take appropriate precautions. If birds or other animals (e.g., cats, civets, ferrets, pigs and dogs) are suspected of being avian flu-infected, immediately notify federal or state animal health officials.

Signs of Avian Flu Illness in Birds

Sudden death; lack of energy, appetite and coordination; purple discoloration and/or swelling of various body parts; diarrhea; nasal discharge; coughing; sneezing; and reduced egg production and/or abnormal eggs.

Avian Flu Symptoms in Humans

Range from fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches to nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, eye infections, difficulty breathing, pneumonia and severe respiratory diseases. Symptoms may depend on which virus strain caused the infection but are often similar to those of human seasonal influenza.

Basic Control Measures

- Wash hands thoroughly (for at least 15 seconds) and frequently, preferably with soap and water (or an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60 percent alcohol, if soap and water are not available).
- Clean and disinfect any suspected infected areas.
- Get informed about avian flu.

Precautions When Working with Potentially Infected Animals

Wear appropriate, preferably disposable, personal protective equipment (PPE), or wear equipment that can be disinfected:

- Gloves. • Shoe covers. • Safety goggles.
- Outer garments with a waterproof apron.
- Wear at least the minimum level of respiratory protection, an N95 or higher respirator.
- While wearing PPE, avoid eating, drinking and smoking.
- Wash hands after removing gloves and other PPE.

Additional Guidance

- Get the seasonal influenza vaccine.
- If you develop flu-like symptoms, stay at home except to get medical attention.

For more information:



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