

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

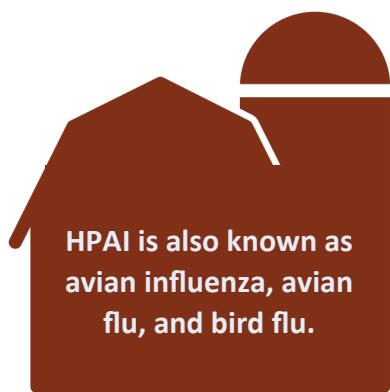


Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza spreads mainly among domesticated and wild birds. It can also spread to other animals.

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 and other infected animals.

Animal products such as eggs, unpasteurized milk, and uncooked meat might also spread the virus.

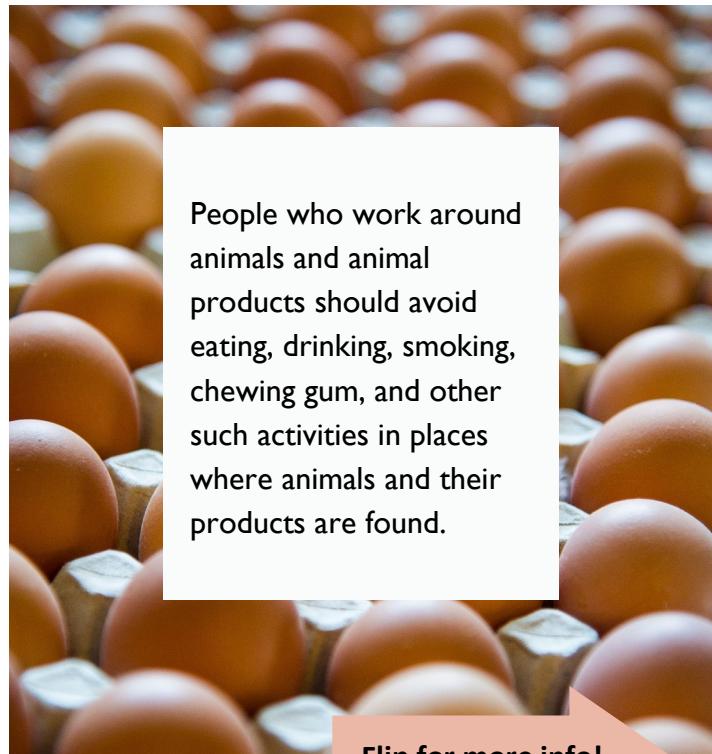


The risk of humans getting avian flu is low, but infections have happened among highly exposed individuals.

People who work or live around infected domestic poultry, cows, mink, and other livestock are at risk of exposure to avian flu. So are people who might have direct contact with wild birds or animals, like hunters and bird enthusiasts. Unprotected contact with infected animals or animal products 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 to humans. If cows, mink, or other livestock are infected, they can spread it to humans via their secretions and droppings.

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

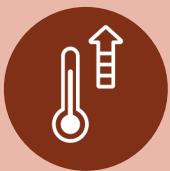
- Past outbreaks of avian influenza caused severe illness and death in some people, particularly poultry workers and others who were highly exposed to the virus without protection.
- It is possible that the virus can mutate and increase its ability to spread from animal to human and from human to human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



People who work around animals and animal products should avoid eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum, and other such activities in places where animals and their products are found.

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. You can have avian flu without having all of these symptoms. Report any symptoms so that you can be tested. The testing will tell you whether you have avian flu.



Fever
(Temperature of
100°F [37.8°C])



Sore throat



Runny or
stuffy nose



Eye irritation or pink eye
(*very common symptom*)



Body aches



Fatigue



Shortness of
breath



Headaches

How can I protect against avian influenza?

Your employer should provide you with personal protective equipment (PPE) with no cost to you. Use PPE when in direct contact with potentially infected animals or animal products. This is especially important when touching or working in the same building as sick animals. PPE includes:



Properly-fitted
unvented or indirectly
vented safety goggles.



Boots or boot
covers.



Properly fitted
NIOSH-approved
respirators, like an



Disposable gloves.



Disposable
fluid-resistant coveralls
and hair/head covers.



Put on and remove PPE in a clean area, separate from sick animals or animal 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 animals, carcasses, feces or litter, unpasteurized milk, and water that may be contaminated with anything coming from a sick animal (urine, saliva, blood, etc.).



Avoid touching your mouth or eyes when you are in an area with animals or animal products. Avoid eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum, and other such activities in potentially contaminated areas.

To avoid risks of food-borne illnesses, never consume:

*Unpasteurized (raw) milk

*Uncooked meat or eggs

It is important to take actions to protect yourself from the virus while working with animals and animal 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 animals healthy.

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



The health department contacts the worker (or the employer) to set up self-monitoring.



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 10 days after their last exposure.

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 animals or animal products from **3 days prior to the first sick animal until all animals are well or have been removed**.

Why is self-monitoring important?

Self-monitoring helps prevent the spread of 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.

Flip for more info!

Self-monitoring helps prevent the spread of HPAI.

What should I 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 your last exposure. To self-monitor:

- Check for fever daily.
- Be alert for pink eye and 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 free avian influenza testing.
- If you can, stay home from work and avoid contact with others until the test results are back.
- If you must work during this time,
 - Only work on the farm with the sick animals (not other farms).
 - Wear a respirator around others
 - Ask your supervisor to assign you tasks with little contact with people and animals for the time being.

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

For more information visit:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/influenza/avian.htm

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/occupational-health/farm-health.htm

www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/farm-workers.html

Use these links in a web browser, or point a mobile device camera at the QR codes below.



Who will collect my self-monitoring information?

There are two options:

1. Local health department (preferred option). They will contact you to:
 - Explain the importance of self-monitoring.
 - Give you the option to self-monitor using a daily text or email.
 - Ask for your name, phone number (or WhatsApp), address and email, so that they can contact you if needed.
 - Answer your questions about self-monitoring and avian influenza.
2. Employer (alternative option). If needed, your employer or someone else on the farm can instead ask you and others about your symptoms.
 - Your employer will then let the health department know how many people were asked about symptoms and had symptoms.
 - They will only share your name and contact information with the health department if you need to be tested or treated.

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 (legal) 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.

