



Avian Influenza Frequently Asked Questions

Information is current as of February 2023 and is subject to change.

What is avian influenza?

- Avian influenza is a disease caused by influenza viruses that are typically found in birds.
- Avian influenza viruses normally live in wild waterfowl, like ducks and geese.
- Domesticated birds (chickens, turkeys, ducks, etc.) may become infected with avian influenza. Turkeys and chickens become the sickest.
- Avian influenza can infect mammals. It is possible for humans to be infected, but this is very rare.

Can I become infected with avian influenza?

- Humans can become infected with avian influenza, but this is very rare.
- The risk is highest for people who work with infected birds, like people who work with turkeys and chickens.
- Person-to-person spread of avian influenza is very rare. Most people become infected when they have direct contact with infected birds or with their waste.

How does avian influenza spread?

- Infected birds shed the virus in their saliva, mucus, and feces.
- People can get avian influenza in two ways:
 - By touching bedding, feed, or water contaminated with waste from infected birds, then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - By breathing in the virus in bird respiratory droplets or dust.

What are symptoms of avian influenza in people?

- Symptoms of avian influenza are similar to other respiratory illnesses:
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Runny or stuffy nose
 - Sneezing
 - Shortness of breath
 - Eye irritation
 - Diarrhea
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Rash
 - Headaches

What should I do if I think I have avian influenza?

- Contact your healthcare provider if:
 - you have any of the symptoms above **and**
 - recent contact with domestic poultry (turkeys, chickens, geese, ducks, etc.).
- **Make sure to mention your recent contact with poultry.**
- The only way to tell if you have avian influenza is by taking a flu test.

Is there treatment for avian influenza?

- US CDC recommends that any person with avian influenza start antiviral treatment as soon as possible.
- If you develop any symptoms of avian influenza after being around domestic poultry, make sure to contact your healthcare provider and mention your recent contact with poultry.

Where can I find more information?

- Maine CDC Disease Reporting and Consultation: 1-800-821-5821
- Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry:
https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ahw/animal_health/index.shtml#hpai
- US CDC Avian Influenza: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm>