

AVIAN INFLUENZA GUIDANCE FOR POULTRY WORKERS



What is Avian Influenza (H5N1)?

H5N1 is a virus that can cause a disease known as avian influenza or “bird flu.” Although it is rare, people can get sick with bird flu when they come into contact with infected birds or animals, their body fluids, feces, or their environments.

How Poultry Workers Can Protect Themselves:

- 1 Wear protective clothing when working with sick or dead birds or their environments. This equipment should be provided by your employer.



- 2 Wash your hands throughout the day, after removing protective clothing, and before eating or drinking.



- 3 Shower at the end of your work shift and leave all contaminated clothing and equipment at work.



Symptoms of Avian Influenza in humans can include:

- Fever or chills
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Eye tearing, redness, or irritation
- Headaches
- Muscle or body aches
- Diarrhea
- Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Vomiting

What to do if you are exposed or feel sick:

- If you were in contact with birds or animals infected with H5N1 virus or their environments, you should monitor yourself for symptoms during contact and for 10 days after you stopped contact.
- If you start to feel sick and have symptoms of bird flu, you should isolate away from other people and immediately contact your local health department. You can call 206-418-5500 to ask for the contact information for your local health department.

More information:

For questions about bird flu or about how to get tested:

- Call the Washington State Department of Health at 1-800-525-0127 or visit doh.wa.gov/avian-influenza

For questions about sick or dead animals on the farm:

- Contact your farm veterinarian.



DOH 420-669, April 2025. To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email doh.information@doh.wa.gov.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Get Support

Animal health emergencies can cause stress. If you notice changes in your emotions, attitudes, or cognitive abilities, or if you notice that it has become more difficult for you to care for yourself, your family, or your animals, consider turning to a friend, clergy member, or medical provider immediately. **If the situation is potentially life-threatening, get immediate emergency help by dialing 9-1-1.**

If you are experiencing symptoms of depression, have suicidal thoughts, or simply need to talk to someone, please call, text or chat 988 to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The 988 Lifeline is confidential, free, and available 24/7/365.

Other Resources

Farm Aid

Farm Aid connects farmers with helpful services and resources. Fill out an Online Request for Assistance form (QR code). For assistance call the Farmer Hotline Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern time: 1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243) or email farmhelp@farmaid.org.

Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP):

WRASAP is a group of organizations and community members across the Western region who provide support, resources and funding opportunities to agricultural communities including farmers, ranchers, farmworkers, and their families. To connect to WRASAP services in your area, fill out a contact form (QR code).

WORKERS COMPENSATION & PAID SICK LEAVE

Employees may be eligible for workers' compensation benefits for testing and treatment where their work-related activity resulted in exposure to bird flu. They may also be eligible for time-loss for recovery if they are unable to work their regular job for more than three days due to a work-related condition. Workers who believe they may have contracted bird flu due to work activities can file a workers' compensation claim for consideration with the Department of Labor and Industries. For more information, call 800-547-8367 (en español 360-902-5800) or visit LNI.wa.gov.

In addition to these workers' compensation benefits, Washington State employers must provide paid sick leave to employees. Workers can use earned paid sick leave in order to cover time missed for testing, treatment, preventive medical care, and recovery from bird flu.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Fast Facts



Farm Aid Request for Assistance



WRASAP Contact Form



Paid Sick Leave Law Information



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