

Commonly Asked Questions About Bird (H5N1) and Biosecurity

What is bird flu (H5N1)?

Bird flu is caused by the H5N1 subtype of Influenza A virus. Among migratory birds and poultry, this virus is highly contagious and can cause severe illness and death. Variants of this virus can cause infections in dairy cows and other animals and can cause severe illness in cats. Rarely, it can infect humans.

How is bird flu spread?

Avian influenza (bird flu) is zoonotic, meaning it can be spread between humans and animals. It is spread by handling infected animals or contaminated items. Animals can spread the virus through saliva, feces, milk, and other bodily secretions.

What animals can get bird flu?

Primarily wild birds, poultry, dairy cattle, and cats.

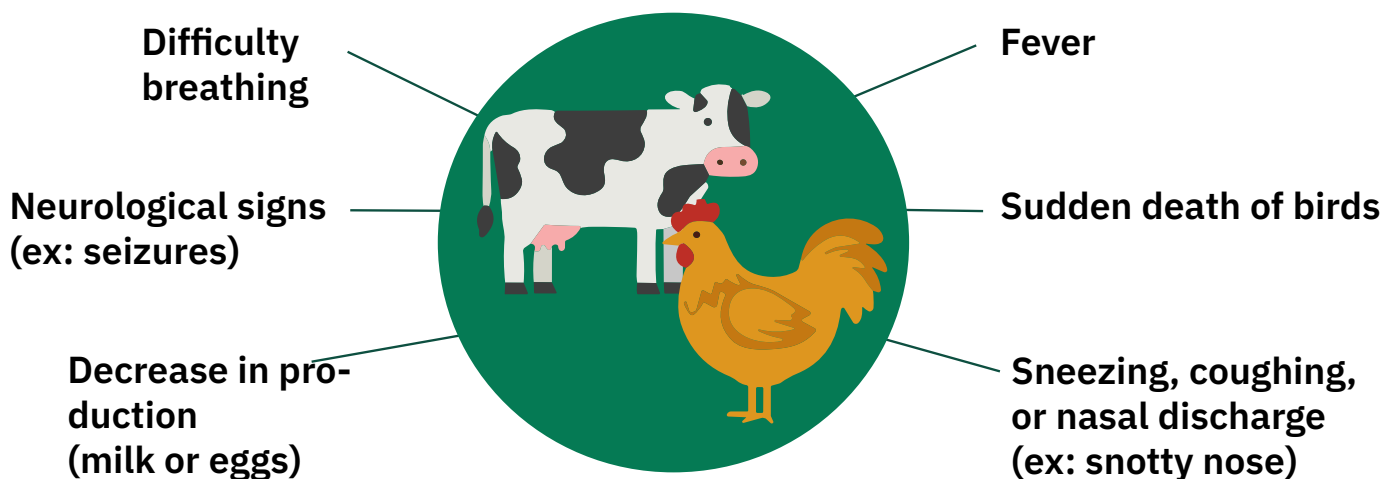
Can humans get bird flu?

Human infections are very rare but can occur through prolonged and close contact with infected birds or contaminated environments. Biosecurity and proper hygiene significantly reduce the risk.

How do I prevent bird flu?

You can prevent the spread of avian influenza by practicing good biosecurity. See back of page for more information.

What are the symptoms of bird flu in animals?



How do I practice good biosecurity?

- ✓ Wash your hands before and after handling animals.
- ✓ Do not touch animals that are not yours.
- ✓ Use boot baths or disinfect shoes before entering barns.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect equipment after using it and before moving it to a new area.
- ✓ Report and isolate sick animals.
- ✓ Minimize visitors.

How do I report sick animals?



In Florida: Call the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at (850) 410-0900, after hours at (800) 342-5869, or by email at RAD@FDACS.gov



In Georgia: Call the Georgia Department of Agriculture's avian influenza Hotline at (770) 766-6850.

Testing is free through the gapoultrylab.org/avian-influenza-hotline/

For more information

[piecenter.com](https://www.piecenter.com) | [scaahs.org](https://www.scaahs.org)

Defend the Flock: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/defend-the-flock>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/about/>

United States Department of Agriculture:

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation>

University of Georgia Extension:

<https://extension.uga.edu/topic-areas/animal-production/poultry-eggs/avian-flu.html>

Revere, I. L., Sanders, C. B., Telg, R. W., & Anderson, B. D. (2025). Development and evaluation of a biosecurity plan framework for livestock exhibitions [Unpublished master's capstone]. University of Florida.

EDIS: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/AN404>

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