
National IHS Public Health Council

National IHS Public Health Council Advisory – Avian Flu (Bird Flu H5N1) **Update January 7, 2025**

I am writing to provide you with an important update regarding avian “bird flu” influenza (H5N1), also known as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). My goal is to ensure that you have the most current information and to assure you that IHS remains situationally aware in partnership with other public health agencies.

As you may have heard, the first human case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) or H5N1 has died in Louisiana. This patient remains the only human case of H5N1 who has died in the United States.

While the general public's health risk remains low, people who work with birds, poultry, or cows or have recreational exposure to them are at higher risk.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Fever,
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Difficulty Breathing
- Runny or Stuffy Nose
- Muscle Aches
- Diarrhea/vomiting
- Eye Tearing, Redness or Irritation (Conjunctivitis)
- It is important to note that infection with the influenza virus, including the novel influenza A virus, does not always cause fever. The absence of fever should not supersede clinical judgment.

Our partners at the CDC continue to support states that monitor people exposed to cows, birds, or other domestic or wild animals infected or potentially infected with avian influenza A(H5N1) viruses. More information on monitoring can be found at [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A\(H5N1\) Virus: Interim Recommendations for Prevention, Monitoring, and Public Health Investigations | Bird Flu | CDC](#)

Preventive Recommendations:

- If you work with poultry or dairy farms, wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which include masks (such as an N95), head cover, coveralls, goggles, boots, and gloves
- Do not touch sick or dead animals or their droppings
- Do not bring sick wild animals into your home

- Do not eat uncooked or undercooked food. Cook poultry, eggs, and other animal products to the proper temperature.
- Prevent cross-contamination between raw and cooked food
- Avoid uncooked food such as unpasteurized raw milk and cheese from animals that may have been exposed to infection.
- Wash hands with soap for 20 seconds.
- Conduct Active Flu monitoring and surveillance at your home and workplace
- Self-monitor exposure and consider wearing PPE, if applicable
- Vaccinate against the Flu, COVID-19, and all other vaccine preventable diseases
- Stay home when feeling sick

Our clinicians are actively monitoring for Influenza-Like Illnesses (ILI). Healthcare personnel are advised to use appropriate personal protective equipment when caring for a patient with an influenza-like illness. For any patient with confirmed, probable, or suspected infections, initiating antiviral treatment with oral oseltamivir (Tamiflu) taken twice daily for 5 days as soon as possible is recommended.

We are diligently monitoring and preparing for this virus and will continue communicating with all of you.

Thank you for everything that you do each day!

dr C

L. Christensen MD MBA MSJ FACS
Chief Medical Officer
Indian Health Service