

AVIAN INFLUENZA PRECAUTIONS

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1. Most cases of bird flu infection in **humans** have resulted from **contact with infected poultry (domesticated chickens, ducks, and turkeys) or surfaces contaminated with secretions or excretions from infected birds**. There have also been a few infections in pigs, tigers, leopards, stone martens, and housecats.
2. Over 80 species of wild birds worldwide carry the viruses in their intestines; many birds have died in Asia and Africa. Some birds do not get sick but can carry the virus.
3. **Domesticated birds may become infected with the virus** through
 - a. direct contact with infected waterfowl, migrating birds, shore birds, or infected poultry
 - b. contact with surfaces (such as dirt or cages) or materials (such as water or feed) that have been contaminated with the virus.
4. **People who work with poultry are at a greater risk of exposure.** This could include poultry workers, people who transport poultry, butchers, restaurant employees, bird hunters, wildlife and park officials, farmers, poultry fanciers, ornithologists, veterinarians, zoo keepers, and wildlife rescue volunteers.
5. **What you can do to protect against infection from poultry:**
 - a. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw poultry and eggs
 - b. Use a hand sanitizer which contains 70% alcohol to clean hands
 - c. Clean cutting boards and other utensils with soap and hot water or a disinfectant to keep raw poultry from contaminating other foods
 - d. Use a food thermometer to make sure you cook poultry to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
 - e. Cook eggs until the whites and yolks are firm
 - f. Avoid exposure to blood, feces or other secretions from birds. Clean boots, shoes, gloves, clothing, and other articles exposed.
6. **In other countries birds infected with the virus have included:** terns, egrets, herons, pigeons, gulls, falcons, cormorants, doves, eagles, and owls. As birds migrate long distances, birds in our country could become infected with Bird Flu and other less pathogenic viruses in the coming years.
7. **What you can do to protect against infection from wild birds:**
 - a. If you handle sick or dead birds, wear disposable gloves and a mask if possible.
 - b. Call local health authorities if you notice an increased number of dead birds in a local area.
 - c. Keep family cats inside the house to minimize their exposure.

- d. Avoid contact with water from bird baths, duck ponds, or areas where water fowl frequent.
- e. Bird feeder precautions- the predominate type of birds at bird feeders do not become infected with the H5N1 virus, so it is unlikely a person could be infected by cleaning a bird feeder. However, there have been some cases of infection in house sparrows, house finches, and other free ranging birds in other countries. If bird flu comes to the USA, additional recommendations will be made.

8. What you can do to protect your pets from Bird Flu:

- a. Keep house cats inside if possible.
- b. If cats or dogs bring their bird prey to you, take precautions when handling the birds. Clean any saliva or excretions from the bird that are on your pet and dispose of all waste materials (wear gloves and a mask if possible). Then follow recommended cleaning procedures suggested for people.
- c. If your pet shows signs of a respiratory infection seek veterinary attention.
- d. Avoid letting pets frequent areas where waterfowl or shore birds are. Do not let them interact with sick or dead birds or the water the birds may have been in.
- e. Regularly clean and disinfect your pets food and water bowls if they are outside. Wild birds could also use these bowls.

9. Have a PET DISASTER PLAN for emergencies:

- a. Store enough food and water for your pet - 2- 4 weeks if possible
- b. Have a list of all medications your pet needs and where to get them
- c. Have extra leashes, pet carriers, or cages to transport or board your pet if an evacuation is necessary
- d. Have your pet microchipped so they can be identified if you become separated from them. Veterinarians can perform this procedure. Also have identification tags and rabies vaccination on their collars.
- e. Keep important pet papers organized in a secure place. Have written instructions on special needs, diets, medications, or routines they have, and when their last vaccinations were given and what veterinary hospital they go to.
- f. Have a current picture of your pet in these papers.
- g. Talk with your family veterinarian about any additional medication your pet may need (insulin, etc.) and if an extra prescription could be obtained if travel is limited by natural disasters or pandemics.

10. Stay informed, as recommendations may change when we are facing life's unknowns.