

Bird Flu Prevention and Protection Through Biosecurity Measures

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Bird Flu Carriers: Wild migratory waterfowl, ducks and geese, are the primary carriers of a variety of strains of bird flu viruses, including the H5N1 subtype which can be dangerous to humans. New strains of H5 and/or H7 bird flu viruses have always arrived every year. H5N1 is not in North America at this time.

H5N1, is rarely transmissible from infected poultry to humans. Only people who have contact with-H5N1 infected poultry, their feces, or water contaminated by their droppings may become infected.

H5N1, is NOT transmissible from human to human at this time, but it is feared that H5N1 might mutate into a form that is transmissible from human to human. If H5N1 becomes transmissible from human to human, birds will no longer be a source of infection.

Standard biosecurity measures can protect your birds from infection by various diseases including the H5N1 virus. The following simple measures can be taken to protect your birds from exposure to H5N1 and other infectious diseases.

1. If your birds are housed inside a building or your home, and you have no poultry at your home and you do not have any free roaming poultry with access to your facilities, your birds will have no opportunity to contract the disease. If you handle other birds away from home or visit an area with free-roaming waterfowl, it is recommended to shower, change clothing and disinfect shoes before handling your birds.
2. If you do not visit or frequent feed stores or other sites frequented by individuals or farmers with free ranging chickens, or other poultry, you should have no opportunity to pick up viral particles on your shoes to track into your home or facility.
3. If you have a small flock of poultry that is contained in a building or a securely fenced area with wire enclosing the top portion so that wild birds cannot enter, your poultry will be protected from exposure to bird flu from wild birds. However, if you DO have any poultry located at your facility, it is recommended that you routinely wear special footwear outside when feeding the poultry, and remove that footwear prior to entering your house or exotic bird facility.
4. If you have a neighbor with free ranging poultry, especially if they have a pond which is visited by wild waterfowl during migration, it is recommended that you put in place a security fence so that the free ranging poultry cannot enter your property.
5. If you have a pond on your property which provides access to wild waterfowl, and you have a flock of ducks or geese or swans, it is recommended that you corral the domestic or exotic waterfowl so that they cannot access the pond and contact the wild migratory waterfowl or their feces.
6. If you have family or friends who own poultry or waterfowl, it is recommended that you have them remove their footwear prior to entering your home or bird facility.
7. If you are feeding wild songbirds at bird feeders, it is unlikely that you will come into contact with a bird carrying bird flu. However, it is wise to wash your hands well after handling and refilling the feeder.
8. If you find a dead wild bird near your birds, wear disposable gloves to pick it up. Take it to a vet or state lab for necropsy and testing.