

H5N1 Bird Flu Information Sheet

Nebraska DHHS Phone Number: 402-471-2937

What to Know About H5N1 Bird Flu

About H5N1 bird flu.

H5N1 bird flu is a disease caused by certain flu viruses that usually spread between birds, not people. H5N1 bird flu can also infect cows and other animals. People rarely get bird flu, but when they do, it is most often through direct unprotected contact (no gloves, protective wear, protective face covering, or eye protection) with infected animals. H5N1 bird flu virus can make you sick if you breathe it in or if it gets in your eyes, nose, or mouth, particularly if you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth after touching contaminated environmental surfaces, clothing, skin, or hair. Do not touch or consume raw milk or raw milk products, especially from animals with confirmed or suspected H5N1 bird flu virus infection or in areas known to have infected herds. Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when in contact with or around animals confirmed or potentially infected, including dairy cows, or when in contact with confirmed or potentially contaminated raw milk, environmental surfaces, or other items. Human illness from bird flu ranges from no symptoms at all to severe illness, resulting in death.

Close contact with infected animals or their environment.

If you had close contact with animals confirmed with or potentially infected with bird flu, including dairy cows, or when in contact with confirmed or potentially contaminated raw milk, surfaces, or other items, contact Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services or local health department. In the meantime, watch for the symptoms listed below.

Your local health department will contact you for symptom monitoring.

This monitoring could include contacting you daily by phone, email, or text to ask about how you feel for 10 days after you were last exposed. They may also ask that you get tested for bird flu if you have symptoms. During the 10 days after your last exposure, you should watch for the symptoms listed below. **Should you develop any of these symptoms, please notify your local health department (QR code below) immediately** so they may assist you in providing testing and treatment recommendations. If you are unable to reach someone at your local health department please call Nebraska DHHS (phone number above).

- Fever (Temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater)
- Feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Eye tearing, redness, or irritation
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath
- Headaches, muscle aches, or body aches
- Diarrhea

Find your local
health department



Information for
Exposed Workers



You may be prescribed flu antiviral drugs.

If you get sick after being exposed to infected animals or their environment, a healthcare provider may write you a prescription for an antiviral drug to treat your illness. It is important to take the medication as directed as soon as possible. If you are not sick but were exposed to infected or potentially infected animals, or their environment, your local health department or a healthcare provider might offer the same antiviral drug to reduce your risk of becoming sick.