

# HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI)

GUIDANCE FOR ANIMAL CONTROL, SHELTER, AND VETERINARY FACILITIES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

## What is Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza?

- Avian Influenza (AI) is commonly known as bird flu HPAI
- Two types of AI:
  1. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), which causes severe disease in poultry
  2. Low Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (LPAI), which causes little to no clinical disease in birds
- HPAI is naturally occurring in wild birds, especially waterfowl
- Current subtype spreading is H5N1
- CDC considers risk of HPAI bird-to-human transmission low. Currently, very few people in the United States have been affected by this strain.

## What are the symptoms of HPAI in Poultry (e.g. chickens and turkeys)?

- Sudden death of bird with no clinical symptoms
- Lack of energy
- Loss of appetite
- Swelling of head, comb, eyelid, wattles, and hocks
- Discoloration of wattles, comb, and legs
- Nasal discharge
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Neurological signs (head tilt, tremors, incoordination)
- Diarrhea

## What are the symptoms of HPAI in wild birds?

- Variable - asymptomatic to serious illness and death

## How does HPAI spread?

- Direct contact with infected bird excretions, such as feces (most common), nose, eye, or mouth secretions
- Contact with contaminated equipment or materials
- Contact with contaminated surfaces or water
- Spread through contaminated clothing and shoes

## How to keep animal control/shelter/veterinary staff healthy?

- Avoid unprotected direct physical contact with sick birds, carcasses, bird feces or litter, and surfaces or water that might be contaminated with bird feces (buckets, kennels, cages, bowls).
- Wear recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) when in direct contact with birds, carcasses, or equipment that may be contaminated with bird feces.
- Recommended PPE includes: Respirator (e.g. N-95), disposable gloves, properly fitted unvented or indirectly vented safety goggles, boots or boot covers, disposable fluid-resistant gown or coveralls, and disposable head cover or hair cover. Put on and take off PPE in separate clean areas.
- Reusable PPE (e.g. rubber boots) should be cleaned until visible dirt is removed, and then disinfected with an EPA-approved [disinfectant](#) that has label claims against Influenza A viruses according to manufacturer instructions.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth after touching any contaminated material while wearing PPE.

- Do not eat, drink, smoke, or use the bathroom while wearing PPE.
- Wash hands well with soap and water after removing PPE or use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not immediately available.
- Shower at the end of the work shift and leave all contaminated clothing and equipment at work. Never wear contaminated clothing or equipment outside of the work area.
- Self-monitor for symptoms of illness for 10 days after the last exposure to potentially infected poultry or contaminated materials, even if contact was minimal and PPE was worn.
- Report exposure to potentially infected birds or contaminated materials to VPH by completing this form and emailing to [vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:vet@ph.lacounty.gov) or by calling 213-288-7060.

### How can I keep birds healthy?

- Any wild bird showing compatible clinical signs should be euthanized immediately.
- Protect all poultry and pet birds from exposure to wild birds. Ensure pet birds are not kept outside. Prevent wild birds from accessing food and water or entering enclosure.
- Quarantine all healthy poultry and pet birds for at least 30 days to monitor for signs of disease before adding them to the flock/adopting out. When possible, only have one employee working with birds in quarantine. This should not be the same person taking care of healthy birds or wild birds. If staff is limited, when caring for birds, start with healthy birds then move to sick birds or wild birds.
- Keep all equipment used in quarantine area separate from other materials to prevent possible disease spread.
- Always wear PPE when handling any bird, carcasses, bird feces or litter, or surfaces/water that may be contaminated with bird feces. Properly remove and dispose PPE after finished handling the bird or materials.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect vehicles when going between properties and all equipment used on any bird regardless of health status.
- When possible, use an alternative facility entrance for all new incoming birds before quarantine.
- Field staff should not be interacting with healthy birds already housed at the shelter.
- Poultry, wild birds, and pet birds should be housed separately.
- When possible, poultry should be housed in separate buildings and cared for by different people. When space limitations require housing poultry in the same building with non-poultry, ensure non-poultry bird species are not housed in same room. For all other species housed near poultry provide as much space between them as possible.

### What should I do if I find a sick bird?

- Report sick or dead birds to Veterinary Public Health (VPH) by completing this [reporting form](#) and emailing it to [vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:vet@ph.lacounty.gov) or call 213-288-7060. Reporting form can be found here: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/docs/Forms/AnimalDiseaseDeath.pdf>

### Resources

- Avian Influenza – Veterinary Public Health: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/AI.htm>
- Protecting Workers from Avian Influenza: U.S. Resources - <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/avianflu/usresources.html>
- CDC Information Page: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm>
- Facility Biosecurity Consultations & Flock Testing: [https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal\\_Health/cahen.html](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/cahen.html)
- Guidance for Sick or Injured Wildlife: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Health/Rehab/Facilities>
- EPA Information on Antimicrobial Products to Use Against Avian Influenza: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/antimicrobial-products-registered-disinfection-use-against-avian-influenza>