Bird flu toolkit

25 November 2024

# What is bird flu

* Bird flu is cause by some strains of influenza A.
* Any bird can be infected.
* Wild birds can carry it without getting sick.
* Some strains can spread easily from wild birds to poultry. The poultry can get very sick and die.
* Australian farms have had bird flu outbreaks.
* Bird flu has spread to other animals overseas, including cattle, goats, cats and foxes.

Bird flu rarely infects people, but it can happen, especially during animal outbreaks.

Getting a seasonal flu vaccine every year can help prevent bird flu becoming a bigger threat to people.

# How bird flu spreads to people

Some bird flu strains spread from animals to people, but this is rare.

This could come from:

* wild birds
* poultry farms
* livestock
* backyard birds
* wild mammals.

# How bird flu infects people

You can be infected by:

* touching infected animals without personal protective equipment (PPE)
* touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth
* breathing in dust or droplets that contain the virus
* having liquid with the virus in it splash into your eyes, nose or mouth.

Wearing appropriate PPE correctly can protect you.

# Symptoms of bird flu in people

Most people have mild or no symptoms. Some people get very sick and need to go to hospital.

Symptoms include:

* fever (temperature of 38°C or over), chills or shakes
* sore throat
* cough
* runny nose
* difficulty breathing (shortness of breath)
* headache or muscle aches and pains
* diarrhoea
* nausea or vomiting
* red, sore eyes (conjunctivitis).

If you feel sick *and* have been in contact with an infected animal, their materials or environments:

* seek medical advice – Call your doctor to say you have been around infected animals
* tell your employer
* **stay away** from others (until you talk to a doctor) – if you can’t do this, wear a mask.

# People most at risk of catching bird flu

Those most at risk of catching bird flu include:

* people who work with poultry
* people who work with poultry products
* bird flu outbreak responders
* bird handlers
* wildlife workers and carers
* hobby farmers
* backyard poultry owners.

# Protecting yourself from bird flu when working with birds

Bird flu can make you sick. These actions can protect you:

* Don’t touch birds, unless you have to.
* Wash hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and running water.
* Wear appropriate PPE.
* If you get symptoms, call your doctor to say you have been around birds.

Getting a seasonal flu vaccine every year can help prevent bird flu becoming a bigger threat to people.

# Recommended PPE\* when working with birds infected with bird flu

At a minimum, wear:

* Coveralls (fluid resistant if appropriate)
* waterproof apron (if needed for task)
* P2/N95 face mask (minimum) (powered air purifying respirator with P3 filters may be used)
* goggles and/or face shield
* head or hair cover (if using un-hooded coveralls)
* gloves
* waterproof boots.

Your work must give you PPE and train you to:

* use it
* put it on
* take it off
* discard it in the appropriate bin
* shower before leaving work, if possible
* leave used clothes and equipment at work.

\* The type of PPE may change based on your work environment and the tasks you do. Your workplace will tell you what PPE to wear.

# How to put on and take off a P2/N95 mask

Bird flu can make you sick. Wearing appropriate PPE can protect you.

To put on your mask correctly:

* wash hands with soap and water
* put mask over mouth and nose
* put the elastic bands over your head
* fit snuggly at bridge of nose and under chin by using the adjusters
* check the mask fit each time it is put on or adjusted.

To remove and dispose of a mask:

* with clean hands, grasp elastics at back of the head and remove by only touching the elastics
* discard mask in appropriate bin
* wash hands with soap and water.

Well fitted P2/N95, P3 and powered air purifying respirator masks protect you from bird flu, when worn with other PPE.

**For more information, visit birdflu.gov.au.**