

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 10/10/2025

TO: Grant County Media

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

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WSDA Detects Avian Influenza in Commercial Flock in Grant County

No human cases have been reported at this time

GRANT COUNTY, WA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) [reported Grant County's first case of avian influenza \(bird flu\) in a commercial poultry flock](#). Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and Grant County Health District (GCHD) are monitoring for illness among workers with exposure to infected birds as a precautionary measure.

While the risk to humans is still considered low, there are steps you should take to keep you and your family safe. People who have job-related or recreational exposure to infected birds or other animals are at higher risk of exposure and should take precautions.

About Bird Flu

Bird flu is a disease caused by influenza viruses that naturally occur among wild aquatic birds. It can also infect other types of birds and many other animal species. In rare cases, bird flu can infect people and make them sick. This typically has only happened to people who have had close contact with avian influenza-infected birds or other animals or to environments where infected animals are or have been present.

How Bird Flu is Spread to People

Infected animals spread the virus through their saliva, mucus and feces. It is also found in the raw milk of infected dairy cattle. People can get infected if the virus gets into a person's eyes, nose, or mouth or if it is breathed in. **No person-to-person spread of bird flu has been identified in the United States at this time.**

Current Situation

Detections of bird flu in birds and other animals have been reported this season across the US, including in Washington. While this is the first domestic bird outbreak in Grant County, over 100 wild birds have tested positive for bird flu in our county since January 2022.

Since 2024, there have been 70 confirmed human cases of bird flu reported in the United States and one confirmed death. Data on human cases of bird flu in Washington is available here: <https://doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/illness-and-disease-z/avian-influenza>

High Risk Groups

You're at a higher risk of getting bird flu if you have close or prolonged contact with infected animals or their contaminated environments without proper protection. To reduce your risk, avoid contact whenever possible or wear [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) when around infected animals. Anyone with an increased risk of exposure to H5 bird flu can contact GCHD to request PPE - (509) 770-7960.

High risk groups may include:

- [Backyard poultry owners](#)
- [Dairy Workers](#)
- [Poultry Workers](#)
- [Veterinary staff](#)
- [Hunters](#)

Symptoms

Possible symptoms of bird flu include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Nausea
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Eye infection
- Difficulty breathing
- Pneumonia
- Severe respiratory disease

What to Do if You're Sick After Contact with Ill or Infected Animals

If you have these symptoms after being around birds, livestock, other animals suspected of being infected with bird flu, or their environments or supplies you should:

- Contact your doctor right away
- Inform your doctor that you were in contact with high-risk animals
- Wear a face mask for all appointments

How to Protect Yourself

- **Avoid contact with animals that could be infected with bird flu.** Do not handle sick or dead birds or livestock.
 - **Practice good hygiene.** Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. This is especially important after handling birds, livestock, or anything in their environments.
 - **Cook poultry, meat, and eggs thoroughly.** Ensure all poultry, meat, and eggs are cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C) to kill potential viruses.
 - **Avoid raw milk.** Do not drink raw (unpasteurized) milk or consume products made from it, as they can carry harmful germs, including influenza viruses.
 - **Protect pets.** Cats are especially vulnerable to avian influenza. Dogs can also be infected though it is much rarer.
 - Limit your pets' unsupervised time outdoors to prevent them from hunting wild birds or other animals.
 - Do not let hunting dogs retrieve or have contact with sick birds or birds found deceased.
 - Do not feed your animals raw milk or uncooked meat, including raw pet food diets.
 - Talk with your veterinarian if you have questions or concerns about avian influenza in a pet.
 - **Protect backyard poultry and livestock.**
 - Keep wild birds and animals away from your animals.
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- Disinfect equipment often and don't share equipment with other farms.
- Have dedicated clothing and shoes to care for your animals that you do not wear off your property or bring inside your home.
- **Consider getting the seasonal flu vaccine.** The flu shot will not protect you from avian flu but will help decrease the chance of the virus mutating. The flu shot can also help keep your immune system strong and less vulnerable to other infections, including bird flu.

What to Do if You Encounter Sick or Dead Birds or Livestock:

- Avoid direct contact with the animal. Use PPE if handling the animal is necessary.
- If you have had close or prolonged unprotected contact with infected animals or their environments, monitor for symptoms for 10 days after your last exposure.
- Report sick/dead **domestic animals** to the Washington State Department of Agriculture [online](#) or by calling 1-800-606-3056.
- Report sick/dead **wild birds or wildlife** to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife using their [online report form](#).

More Information

- [H5N1 Bird Flu: Current Situation Summary | Avian Influenza \(Flu\) \(cdc.gov\)](#).
- [Backyard Flock Owners](#)
- [Pet Owners](#)
- [Veterinarians](#)

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