

***Bird* flu (Avian influenza): Information for those who have been in contact with infected poultry or wild birds**

**What is a contact of bird flu?**

A person who is a contact of bird flu is someone who has been in direct contact (within three feet or 1metre) with a source or potential source of bird flu virus, within the past seven days.

This means direct handling of birds, or sharing the same confined airspace as the birds or their droppings.

This can happen if you live on a poultry farm, or work with poultry, or keep poultry at home, and the poultry are infected or suspected of having bird flu. The virus is present in large amounts in the droppings of poultry with bird flu.

You have been identified by public health doctors and vets as being a contact.

**What happens if I am identified as a contact?**

A Public Health Doctor will ask you a number of questions about your health and the type of work you do, and give the following advice:

**1. Take a drug to prevent bird flu**

* You will be offered a course of Tamiflu. This is an antiviral medicine used to prevent or treat bird flu. If you do become infected with the virus, this medicine may prevent you from becoming ill or reduce the severity of the illness. This will be free of charge. Please read the Tamiflu leaflet provided by Public Health, which explains this medication in more detail.

**2. Check your temperature twice a day and look out for flu like symptoms**

* Fever (380C or 100.40F or higher)
* Flu like symptoms (cough, runny nose, sore throat, temperature or aches and

pains)

* Diarrhoea, stomach pains
* Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

You will be given a thermometer to measure your temperature regularly. If you develop any of the symptoms listed above during the **ten days** after your last contact with poultry, contact the Public Health Doctor using the phone number below. Public Health will also be in daily contact with you to check you don’t have any symptoms. You will be given a small supply of masks to wear if you are unwell when seeking medical assistance. Make sure you ring first, and tell them about the type of work you do. Avoid contact with others until you have been checked out.

**3. Wash your hands frequently**

Always wash your hands with soap and water after any contact with poultry, manure or contaminated surfaces. Hand washing is one of the most important protections against bird flu, and should be carried out frequently with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.

**4. Avoid all contact with potentially infected poultry or manure**

If a farm is infected with bird flu, only persons authorised by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will be allowed into close contact with potentially infected poultry or manure. Those allowed must comply with requirements laid down by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

**5. Do not visit other farms or unaffected agricultural locations with poultry or other birds, to avoid spread of contaminated materials.**

Further information is available on the HPSC website at <http://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/influenza/avianinfluenza/factsheetsleaflets/File,1380,en.pdf>

**Your Public Health Contact details are:**

**Office hours: Monday-Friday (9.00am-5.00pm) Tel.**

**Outside office hours: Saturday and Sunday and Monday – Friday 5.00pm – 9.00am**