

Factsheet for the General Public

Avian Influenza/Influenza of Zoonotic Origin (Bird Flu): What to do after contact with sick or dead birds or animals

The risk of getting bird flu from birds or animals is low. But it is important to take sensible precautions and watch for symptoms for 10 days after contact.



Why this matters

- Bird flu (avian influenza/influenza of zoonotic origin) is a virus that mainly affects birds, and occasionally affects other animals.
- Very rarely, it can spread to people after close contact with infected birds or animals.
- Bird flu (avian influenza/ influenza of zoonotic origin) infects **wild birds and poultry**, and can occasionally infect some mammals (e.g., foxes, seals, mink, cats **and occasionally cattle**).



What you should do?

- Do **not** touch sick or dead birds or animals.
- Keep children and pets away from dead birds or animals.
- Avoid areas with bird droppings or carcasses.
- Wash your hands well after being outdoors and before eating.
- Report dead wild birds or animals to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).



What is the risk to humans?

- Human infections are rare.
- Risk is mainly to people with **close, unprotected contact**.



If you had contact

Contact means things like:

- touching a sick or dead bird or animal
 - touching bird droppings
 - being close to sick birds without protection
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- Watch for symptoms for 10 days: fever (38°C or higher), cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, or red or watery eyes, unusual tiredness, muscle aches, headache.
 - If symptoms develop: stay at home, avoid close contact with others, and call your GP or local Public Health team.
 - Tell them you had contact with birds or animals.



Extra protection (if you must handle birds/animals)

- If you work with birds or animals, (for example on a farm), wear gloves and a mask when handling them, and wash your hands afterwards.
- There is **no general use vaccine** for avian influenza.
- Seasonal flu vaccination is recommended for people who work with birds or animals.



Where to get help

- Public Health information: <https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/influenza/avianinfluenza/>
- Report dead birds: <https://aviancheck.apps.services.agriculture.gov.ie/report>
- HSE Live: Freephone 1800 700 700 (Mon–Fri 8am–8pm; Sat 9am–5pm).

Accessibility: If you need this information in another format, ask your healthcare team.