



CDPH H5N1 Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) Situational Awareness Webinar for Chicago Providers

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

January 30, 2025

Reporting/Testing/Infection Control:

- **To request testing for suspect H5N1 cases, is testing limited to patients that are Chicago residents only? Or can one contact CDPH for testing approval for any patient at a Chicago-based hospital?**
 - **Chicago residents:** to request testing for suspect H5N1 cases in Chicago residents, call the CDPH Disease Reporting Hotline at (312) 743-9000, option 2, for guidance and testing instructions.
 - **Non-Chicago residents:** CDPH encourages you to contact the local health department in the jurisdiction of the symptomatic patient. If you cannot make contact, please reach out to the Illinois Department of Public Health's Communicable Disease Section at (217) 782-2016.
- **Is there a time recommended for room closure if no Airborne Infection Isolation Room (AIIR) is available on site?**
 - Yes, there is a table for the length of time rooms should be closed based on the ventilation efficiency (you can obtain this information from your Facilities team). <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/environmental-control/appendix-b-air.html>. If you don't know the number of room air exchanges, we recommend closing the room for two hours minimum.

Veterinary-Related:

- **For individuals who work with deceased bird flocks, there are concerns over potential exposure to HPAI to personal cats. Are there specific protective/preventive measures one can take to avoid exposing domesticated animals?**
 - The Center for Disease Control recommends wearing full PPE (to the extent possible) when around sick/dying birds. While specific to backyard flocks, this resource is helpful <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/caring/index.html>.
 - Clothes or other fomites may be a potential exposure source. Protective measures include practicing hand hygiene, washing exposed skin, and changing clothes and shoes before interacting with pets. See <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-health/avian-influenza/avian-influenza-h5n1-cats> for more information.
- **Is contact with a domestic animal fed raw meat or dairy products also considered a risk factor that would trigger testing, considering the cases identified in cats that have been linked to raw meat diets and unpasteurized dairy products?**

- If a cat is showing neurologic signs and is fed a raw diet that would be an indication for testing the cat for H5N1, in the absence of another identified diagnosis that could explain these symptoms.
- If you are a human healthcare provider evaluating a patient who had contact with an animal with these signs and risk factors, it would be best to ask the patient first if the cat has been evaluated by a veterinarian, and if the cat is being tested for avian influenza (or H5N1). Call the CDPH Disease Reporting Hotline at (312) 743-9000, option 2, for guidance and consultation.
- Suspected animal cases in Chicago should be reported immediately to the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA), (217) 782-4944 and CDPH, (312) 743-9000, option 7.
- Suspected cases outside of Chicago where the IDA is unable to be reached, please contact the State Health Veterinarian, Dr. Austin (217) 725-8059 (see slide 38).
- **What can pet bird owners do to prevent H5N1 in their pets?**
 - Eliminate opportunities for pets to interact with wildlife and practice infection control around backyard flock (see slide 39).
- **Have there been any positives in domestic cats in Chicago at this point?**
 - Since 2022 there have been 84 reported cases in the US. None were reported in Chicago. To follow updates on H5N1 detections in mammals visit <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/mammals>.

For answers to additional questions not contained in this FAQ, please email CDPHHealthSystems@cityofchicago.org.