

For Immediate Release

Contact: Susan Ringler Cerniglia, MPH
Public Information Officer
Washtenaw County Health Department
ringlers@washtenaw.org
Cell 734-678-7010

Washtenaw County Health Department Advisory: Avian Influenza Confirmed in Birds
Recommendations for people who own or have contact with birds

YPSILANTI, Mich., April 14, 2022 – Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 has been confirmed in birds in Washtenaw County. No human illness has been identified, and all individuals potentially exposed to the confirmed cases are being contacted. Washtenaw County Health Department is sharing this information to alert people who own or work with birds, including poultry, to the possibility of infection and recommended precautions.

HPAI in birds is not a food safety concern. You cannot get avian influenza by eating properly cooked poultry products.

Both wild and domestic birds, including chickens, may be infected with avian influenza viruses. Avian flu viruses spread easily among birds and – while rare – can spread from birds to people. Spread of avian flu viruses from a bird to a person mainly happens through droplets, the same way that human flu viruses spread. If exposed, individuals need to watch for symptoms of influenza for 10 days after their last exposure to the infected birds. Similar to seasonal influenza illness in humans, avian influenza viruses can be treated using influenza antiviral drugs. These medications work better the sooner they are given. If you suspect you may be ill, please contact your health care or urgent care provider.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the risk to people from HPAI viruses to be low. To date, no human HPAI infections have been detected in the United States.

Birds or flocks infected with HPAI may not show routine signs of illness. Sudden death is a major indicator of HPAI; however, sick birds may show neurological signs; difficulty walking; lack of appetite, energy or vocalization; significant drop in egg production; swollen combs, wattles, legs or head; diarrhea; or sneezing, coughing or nasal discharge.

In Michigan, HPAI has been previously detected in wild birds ~~as well as commercial*~~ and non-commercial poultry flocks. The [Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development](#) urges poultry owners to step up their own biosecurity precautions by minimizing the number of people coming in contact with birds, isolating birds from wild birds whenever possible, and disinfecting hands and clothing after coming in contact with poultry.

Residents who notice the death of three or more free-ranging birds should report it to the DNR through the [Eyes in the Field app](#) or by calling 517-336-5030. If your domestic poultry is experiencing severe illness or multiple death losses, contact MDARD at 800-292-3939.

Washtenaw County Health Department
555 Towner Street • Ypsilanti, MI 48198
Phone: 734-544-6700 • Fax: 734-544-6705
washtenaw.org/health



Environmental Health Division
705 N Zeeb Road • Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734-222-3800 • Fax: 734-222-3930
washtenaw.org/envhealth

For more information, go to Michigan.gov/BirdFlu, Michigan.gov/AvianInfluenza or Michigan.gov/AvianDiseases.

****CORRECTION: As of 4/15 HPAI has not been detected in any commercial flocks in Michigan. Our apologies for the error.***

Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community, including responding to health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs.

Local public health information and updates are always available at www.washtenaw.org/health. The Health Department also provides frequent social media updates (@wcpublichealth) and sends regular email updates, sign up at <http://bit.ly/WCHD555>.

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