

What is avian influenza?

Avian Influenza is a type of influenza that spreads among birds. Although it is an infection of birds, it has potential to infect other animals and in rare cases can affect humans.

Human infections with avian influenza are rare. However, some types of the virus, such as H5N1 or H7N9, have been associated with human disease.

Symptoms:

The symptoms of avian influenza in humans vary depending on the strain or subtype of the virus involved. Most infections take the form of a flu-like illness (fever, cough, body or muscle pain, sore throat, runny nose). Other symptoms can include conjunctivitis (red, sore and discharging eyes).

Advice for the public:

In Northern Ireland, guidance on avian influenza is provided by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The Public Health Agency will work with DAERA when managing incidents of avian influenza.

- For the latest Northern Ireland situation please visit:
[Latest Situation | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/latest-situation)
- For the latest guidance and advice on wild birds visit:
[Wild Birds and Advice for the Public | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/wild-birds-and-advice-for-the-public)

If you have found a dead animal it is important that you follow the below routine precautions to prevent any risks to your health:

- do not pick up or touch sick, dying or dead poultry, wild birds or wild animals, and keep pets away from them;
- avoid contact with surfaces contaminated with bird faeces;
- avoid untreated bird feathers (such as those found in the environment) and other bird waste; and,

- maintain good personal hygiene with regular hand washing with soap and use of alcohol-based hand rubs.

You can log any dead wild birds through the [online reporting form](#) on the DAERA website.

If the dead animal tests positive for avian influenza:

If the dead animal tests positive for Avian Influenza and you have previously reported direct contact with the animal you will be contacted by the PHA Health Protection Team who will check these details with you as part of a risk assessment, and provide any relevant health advice. In some circumstances, you may be offered antiviral medicines.

Further information on avian influenza (bird flu) including symptoms, diagnosis, management and epidemiology is available through following PHE website <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/avian-influenza-guidance-data-and-analysis>

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