

# Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Viruses

## FAQs

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

#### **What is Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza?**

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) viruses are responsible for the destruction of more than 48 million commercial poultry birds and other birds in the Midwest United States, and is a threat to commercial and hobby bird producers.

The outbreak of HPAI in spring 2015 was the worst animal disease outbreak in history. This flu is directly related to the recent increase in egg and chicken prices seen in restaurants and grocery stores across the nation.

#### **Can I catch the Avian Influenza Virus?**

There are many forms of avian influenza, but the strains that are currently affecting flocks in the midwest in particular are NOT zoonotic, meaning they are NOT communicable to humans.

#### **Is this avian flu in Nevada?**

To date, no incidents of HPAI have been detected in Nevada. The Nevada Department of Agriculture's (NDA) Animal Disease Lab staff are keeping a very close eye on the situation. Nevada is fortunate that there are no commercial poultry operations, which has kept the risk lower in our state.



#### **I have poultry in my yard, are my birds at risk?**

Avian influenza viruses can infect domestic poultry species, including chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, tucks, geese and guinea fowl. It should be expected that most bird species are susceptible to avian influenza viruses.

Introduction of HPAI viruses into backyard flocks is completely preventable if flock owners implement appropriate biosecurity measures.

Transmission of Avian Influenza Viruses from migratory fowl to domestic poultry has been shown in the Pacific Flyway as recently as spring of 2015. Migratory waterfowl often do not show symptoms of the disease, even though they might be shedding the virus.

#### **What is the Pacific Flyway?**

The Pacific Flyway is a major north-south flyway for migratory birds in America, extending from Alaska to Patagonia. Every year, migratory birds travel some or all of this distance both in spring and in fall, following food sources, heading to breeding grounds, or travelling to wintering sites.

#### **Keep your birds safe**

##### ▶ Six Simple Steps:

1. Isolate your birds
2. Keep it clean
3. Don't carry disease home
4. Avoid sharing tools and equipment
5. Know the warning signs of disease
6. Report sick birds to the NDA Animal Disease Lab

#### **For Updated Information about HPAI**

▶ <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth>

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## What should I do to keep my birds safe?

There are six simple steps that can keep backyard poultry safe and healthy yearround:

- Isolate your birds (from humans and other birds of any species)
- Keep it clean (houses, tools, equipment, shoes, etc.)
- Don't carry disease home (clean vehicles, cages, etc.)
- Avoid sharing tools and equipment
- Know the warning signs of disease
- Report sick birds

**It is important to prevent contact of all domestic poultry with all wild bird species, not just migratory waterfowl or birds which show signs of disease.**

## Is there a vaccination for HPAI?

Currently there are no vaccines that match the genetics of the current HPAI viruses. Though it is unlikely to be transmitted to humans, proper precautions should always be taken around birds:

- Avoid wild birds, and only observe from a distance
- Avoid contact with domestic birds (poultry) that appear ill or have died
- Avoid contact with surfaces that appear to have been contaminated with feces from wild or domestic birds

## What if HPAI is discovered in domestic Nevada poultry?

If any Avian Influenza Viruses are discovered in Nevada, the NDA's Animal Disease Lab will immediately quarantine the bird(s) for testing. The NDA and USDA will institute a rigorous surveillance program of all neighboring flocks. Infected birds or flocks will be humanely euthanized by NDA and/or USDA.

It is important that bird owners and bird watchers report sick birds to the NDA's Animal Disease Lab.



## Report Sick Birds to the Animal Disease Lab

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