



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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AVIAN FLU DETECTED IN STANISLAUS COUNTY

Stanislaus County Public Health received notice that 3 birds have tested positive for avian influenza A (H5N1). Avian influenza viruses, such as the H5N1 strain, are contagious among certain domesticated bird species and can be deadly to birds such as chickens, pheasants, and turkeys, among other domestic fowl. The virus is often spread to domestic birds through interactions with wild birds.

The best way to prevent avian influenza is to avoid sources of exposure whenever possible. Infected birds shed bird flu virus in their saliva, mucous and feces. People rarely get bird flu; however, human infections with bird flu viruses can happen when enough virus gets into a person's eyes, nose or mouth, or is inhaled. This can happen when virus is in the air (in droplets or possibly dust) and a person breathes it in, or when a person touches something that has virus on it and then touches their mouth, eyes or nose. Bird flu infections in people happen most often after close, prolonged and unprotected (no gloves or other protective wear) contact with infected birds and then the person touches their mouth, eyes, or nose.

"While there is currently minimal risk to people, everyone should avoid contact with sick or dead wild birds, their saliva, and their feces," said Dr. Julie Vaishampayan, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer. "To avoid infection from touching possibly contaminated surfaces, wash your hands frequently, keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth, and get the flu shot when available to avoid opportunities for this virus to change gain the ability to spread more easily in people."

Infected birds may show signs of confusion or lack of coordination, diarrhea, coughing and sneezing are also common ailments. Sick or dead birds can be reported to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife through their online form, at (707) 428-2002 or via email at askbdr@wildlife.ca.gov.

People with job-related or recreational exposures to potentially infected birds are at higher risk and should take extra precautions. If a person develops flu-like symptoms within 10 days of contact with an ill or dead wild bird, they should contact their healthcare provider. Please note that chicken, eggs, and other poultry and poultry products are safe to eat when properly handled and cooked. For more information on Avian Flu, please visit Center for Disease Control and Preventions section on Avian flu.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm>

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