

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) prevention for workers in meat and dairy processing



Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is a disease caused by influenza Type A virus.

The virus spreads through the saliva, milk, mucous, and feces of infected birds, cows, and other animals.

It's important to protect workers who have contact with dairy cows or raw milk, which may spread HPAI.

Note: This is a developing situation and advice may change as we learn more about the virus.

HPAI is also known as H5N1, avian influenza, avian flu, and bird flu.

The risk of humans getting avian flu is low. Infections have only happened among highly exposed individuals.

People might be exposed through contact with:

- Infected animals and their waste.
- Unprocessed products from infected animals (raw milk, meat or eggs).
- Equipment, air, water or surfaces around infected animals or products.
- Clothing of people who have worked around infected animals or surfaces.

Working with milk before it is pasteurized may involve a risk of avian flu.

If human illness from avian flu is rare, why is it important to protect against it?

- Past outbreaks of avian influenza caused severe illness and death in some people, particularly poultry workers and others who were highly exposed to the virus without protection.
- It is possible that the virus can mutate and increase its ability to spread from animal to human and from human to human more often and more quickly.

It's always safer to avoid unprotected contact with:

- Sick birds or livestock.
- Carcasses of birds and livestock.
- Raw meat and raw milk.
- Organs and udders from dairy cattle.
- Feces or litter.
- Surfaces and water that have been in contact with the items listed above.

Wash your hands thoroughly after contact with animals or animal products.

Avoid touching your mouth or eyes when you are in an area that could be contaminated.

Avoid eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum, and other such activities in potentially contaminated areas.



Cooked meat and eggs and pasteurized milk are safe to eat and drink.

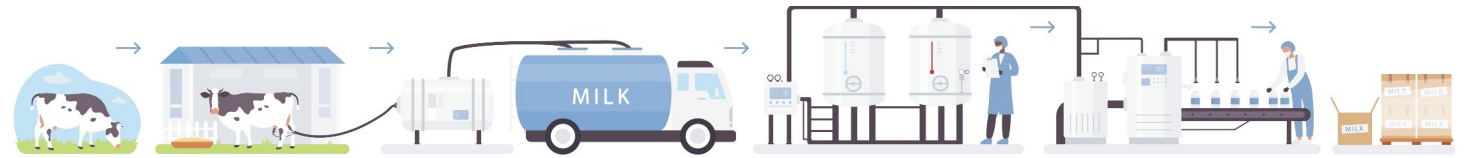


Never consume unpasteurized (raw) milk, uncooked meat, or uncooked eggs.

Where could processing and transportation workers be exposed to HPAI?

There are many ways HPAI **could** spread to people. Until we know more about how it **does** spread, it's best to be careful.

Working with milk before it is pasteurized may involve a risk of avian flu.



Higher risk

Raw milk in these areas may contain viruses or other germs. Wash water, surfaces, and air in these areas may become contaminated. Follow disinfectant protocols. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is recommended.

Low risk

Pasteurization kills viruses and bacteria. Pasteurized milk is safe to work with or drink.

Unloading, handling, or processing dairy cows may involve a risk of avian flu.



Animals' bodies and anything coming from their bodies may contain viruses or germs. Water, surfaces, and air in these areas may become contaminated. Udders and raw milk are a particular concern for avian flu. Follow disinfectant protocols. Sealed packages may make exposure less likely.

➡ PPE use is particularly recommended when handling or processing **lactating** dairy cows.

Disinfection and universal precautions help reduce risk.



Always use universal precautions when working with carcasses and raw milk or meat.

They can contain live viruses (like H5N1) and bacteria. Always use caution when working in places where animals are slaughtered, where parts of animals are processed, or where raw meat or raw milk is processed or stored.



Carefully following your industry's required safety and disinfection routines can help protect your workplace from the virus.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Dairy and Meat Processing Workers

What extra protection could I use?

✓ Personal protective equipment (PPE) is recommended when in direct or close contact with any animals, animal products, or surfaces described in this document. **The list of PPE might change as we learn more about how this virus spreads and its risks to humans.** Current PPE recommendations include:



Properly-fitted unvented or indirectly vented safety goggles



Boots or boot covers



NIOSH-approved respirators, like an N95 mask



Disposable gloves



Disposable fluid-resistant coveralls and hair/head covers.

✓ Ensure reusable PPE (rubber boots and rubber aprons) are cleaned and disinfected by EPA-approved disinfectants with a label with claims against Influenza A viruses.

✓ Put on and remove PPE in a clean area, separate from animal products and contaminated surfaces.

Note: This is a developing situation and advice may change as we learn more about the virus.

Know the possible signs and symptoms of avian influenza infection in humans.

The early signs and symptoms of avian flu are similar to those of seasonal flu. Laboratory testing is required to diagnose someone with avian flu.



Fever of 100°F [37.8°C]



Sore throat



Runny or stuffy nose



Eye irritation



Body aches



Fatigue



Shortness of breath



Headaches

If you think you might have avian influenza:

- Tell your supervisor that you are sick or think you were exposed.
- See a doctor and tell them you think you may have been exposed through your work.
- Avoid contact with people or animals as much as possible until your test results come back.
- Follow your doctor's advice. They may prescribe antiviral drugs to reduce your risk of severe illness.

For more information visit:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/influenza/avian.htm

www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian

www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm

www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h5/worker-protection-ppe.htm

www.osha.gov/avian-flu



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