

HOTLINE Message Bird Flu OR Asian Bird Flu

Introduction:

Welcome to the Asian bird flu information line. This information line is intended to answer the most commonly asked human health related questions pertaining to birds and the Asian bird flu also known as H5N1 Virus.

Lately, there has been a lot of interest in the “bird flu”, also called “avian flu” or “avian influenza.” In particular, there is interest and concern about the Asian OR bird flu virus.

This Asian bird flu virus has spread to over 40 countries in Asia, Europe, the Mid-East and Africa. It has sickened and killed lots of birds (especially poultry) and has also caused illness in over 190 humans, mostly in Southeast Asia.

Additional information can be found on the Arizona Department of Health Service’s website at www.azdhs.gov/avianflu, on the Arizona Department of Agriculture’s webpage at www.azda.gov by clicking on “avian influenza”, or by calling the Arizona Department of Agriculture Livestock and Poultry Hotline at **1-888-742-5334**.

Information is also available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: www.cdc.gov.

For information about backyard birds and bird flu, press 1.

The Asian bird flu has not yet been found in the United States. You are not at risk for getting Asian bird flu from back yard birds & droppings. So far, human cases of Asian bird flu have occurred in Asia or Eastern Europe, and almost all cases have had substantial contact with infected poultry.

State and federal departments of agriculture are testing chickens with illness for evidence of infection with Asian bird flu and other poultry diseases. If your poultry becomes sick, call your local veterinarian. If a local veterinarian is not available, please report sickness or death of your poultry by calling the Arizona Department of Agriculture Livestock and Poultry Hotline at **1-888-742-5334**.

State and federal wildlife officials are testing wild waterfowl, such as wild ducks and geese, and shorebirds, such as plovers and sandpipers, for the Asian bird flu in only **select** areas of the state. Wildlife officials are **NOT** accepting backyard dead wild birds for testing for bird flu virus.

Public health officials are not testing dead birds for bird flu. However, during the mosquito season (March through October), county public health officials in Arizona are accepting fresh, dead wild birds for West Nile virus testing. Pigeons, doves, and baby birds are not being tested at this time. The following is a list of county health departments and their phone numbers for reporting dead birds:

Apache County	928-337-4364 x7140
Cochise County	Bisbee 520-432-9899 Benson 520-586-3686 Douglas 520-805-5601 Sierra Vista 520-803-3915 Willcox 520-384-4662
Coconino County	928-226-2741
Gila County	Globe 928-425-5882 Payson 928-474-1210
Graham County	928-428-1962

Greenlee County	928-865-2601
La Paz County	928-669-1100 or 1-800-893-4314
Maricopa County	602-506-0700
Mohave County	928-757-0901
Navajo County	928-524-4750
Navajo Nation	928-871-6615
Pima County	520-740-2760
Pinal County	1-866-287-0209, ext. 6200 520-866-6200
Santa Cruz County	520-375-7900
Yavapai County	928-771-3149
Yuma County	928-317-4584 x1632 or x1633

For more information about food safety and bird flu, press 2.

It is safe to eat properly prepared and cooked poultry, game and eggs.

Proper handling and cooking of meat and eggs will provide protection against viruses and bacteria. Safe handling and cooking includes:

- Washing your hands before and after handling food.
- Keeping raw meat and their juices away from other foods.
- Washing hands, knives, cutting boards and counter tops with hot soapy water after cutting raw meat.
- Cooking meat thoroughly. When baking birds, set oven temperature to at least 325° F, and use a meat thermometer to cook whole bird meat to a temperature of 180° F.

Commercial poultry operations in the United States have taken strong measures to keep chicken and other poultry separated from wild birds. It is unlikely that commercial poultry (i.e., store-bought meat and eggs) will ever become infected with the Asian bird flu virus. Even-so, commercial poultry is monitored closely for avian diseases.

Hunters are always encouraged to wear gloves when handling and field dressing wild game – including birds. And, game meat should be properly prepared & cooked.

For information on symptoms of infection with Asian bird flu virus in humans, press 3.

If you are sick, consult your doctor.

Testing is available for flu viruses which typically occur during cold & flu season.

At this time, testing for Asian bird flu would not be appropriate - except for patients that recently traveled to Asian bird flu affected areas of the world, and/or had close exposure to Asian bird flu infected birds.

Almost all human cases of Asian bird flu have occurred in Southeast Asia. These bird flu patients had a lot of direct contact with sick poultry, ate sick poultry or live in a village heavily contaminated by infected poultry.

The symptoms for the flu include high fever, chills, body aches, sore throat, coughing, and shortness of breath.

For more information about pets and bird flu, press 4.

At present, the Asian bird flu is not known to be here in the United States.

Dogs and cats are considered to be resistant to most bird flu viruses. Illness with Asian bird flu has been reported in domestic and exotic cats in Asia, which is unusual. Domestic cats could become infected if fed uncooked meat from Asian bird flu-infected chickens. *It is unlikely that cats play a major role in the transmission cycle of bird flu viruses and there is currently no evidence that bird flu-infected cats can infect humans.* However, it is always recommended that pet owners *not feed* uncooked poultry or other raw meats to their cats and dogs due to other harmful microorganisms such as Salmonella that can be found in raw meat. Since cats may kill and eat wild birds and rodents while outdoors, keeping them indoors will prevent the transmission of some infectious diseases.

Those with pet birds, such as parrots, cockatiels, love birds or budgies should not worry about their pets getting Asian bird flu if they have not been out of the country or in contact with birds from other countries.

In order to protect your pet birds from other avian diseases, keep your birds isolated from wild birds. Isolation of newly acquired or ill birds from others for 30 days is recommended.

If your pet is ill, consult your veterinarian for proper diagnosis & treatment.

For more information on what the government is doing to look for Asian bird flu, press 5.

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Backyard poultry owners can learn more about protecting their birds from bird flu viruses by visiting the Arizona Department of Agriculture's webpage at www.azda.gov and clicking on "avian influenza" or calling the Arizona Department of Agriculture at **602-542-4293**.

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