

Avian Flu

Healthcare Workers

Avian flu is a viral disease and it can be very contagious and even deadly in poultry (e.g., chickens, turkeys, ducks). Of great concern are the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) viruses (e.g., H5N1, H7N9) that have killed millions of birds and infected humans in other countries. If avian flu viruses are detected in the U.S., take appropriate precautions. Patients who have traveled within 10 days in a country with avian flu activity and who have a severe, feverish respiratory illness or other signs and symptoms of avian flu should be isolated.

Standard Precautions

- Wash hands thoroughly (for at least 15 seconds) and frequently, including before and after all patient contact, contact with surfaces potentially contaminated with respiratory secretions, and after removing gloves and other personal protective equipment.

Contact Precautions

- Use gloves and gown for all patient contact.
- Use disposable equipment (blood pressure cuffs, thermometers) or equipment that can be disinfected before use with another patient (e.g., stethoscopes).

Droplet Precautions

- Wear goggles/face shields within six feet of the patient.

Airborne Precautions

- The patient should be placed in an airborne infection isolation room.
- If such a room is unavailable, ensure that room air is exhausted through a HEPA filter.
- Use at least a disposable N95 respirator when in the isolation room or other room containing the patient and especially when engaged in high-risk aerosol-generating procedures.

Transmission Prevention Strategies

- Group infected patients in the same room if private rooms are not available.
- Minimize transportation of patients outside the room.
- Limit the number of employees caring for patients.
- Limit the number of visitors to patients.

Additional Guidance

- Get the seasonal influenza vaccine. If you develop flu-like symptoms, stay at home except to get medical attention.
- Avian flu symptoms are similar to those of other types of flu.

For more information:



**Occupational
Safety and Health
Administration**

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