Australian Government

H5 bird flu

Advice for handling of sick or dead birds



H5 bird flu rarely spreads from animals to people, but it can happen through close contact with infected animals (alive or dead) or through contact with places or things that infected birds or animals have contaminated. While the risk to people remains low, it's important to avoid contact with sick or dead birds or other animals and keep pets and children away.

If you can't avoid touching or moving a sick or dead bird or animal, follow good health and safety practices to minimise the risk of transmission.

First: Protect yourself



Keep contact brief and stay outside.
Do not bring sick or dead birds or animals indoors.

Wear:

- waterproof disposable gloves (such as kitchen gloves). If unavailable, a plastic bag that fully covers each hand if handling a sick animal, also wear heavy work gloves to protect yourself from scratches and bites, if appropriate.
- a well-fitted P2/N95 respirator or surgical mask (if a respirator is not available) – if neither is available, a cloth mask may be used.
- eye protection, such as safety goggles – if unavailable, sunglasses may be used
- long-sleeved clothing.

Do not touch your face until you have removed your PPE and washed your hands.

Next: If you need to dispose of a dead bird or animal



In the bin

- put a bag over your gloved hand or use a shovel
- carefully place the dead animal in a leakproof bag
- tie the bag securely
- put the first bag into another one so you are double bagging the dead animal
- tie the bag securely
- put the bag in an outdoor general waste bin (red lid, not recycling or garden waste).

Bury in the ground

- bury in a hole at least 60 cm deep that is away from your house, pets, gardens and water sources
- use a shovel or other tool to gently lift the dead animal, and soil it is touching
- gently place the dead animal into the pit
- bury immediately
- do not bury the dead wildlife in a plastic bag.

Check local council or state and territory government website for further guidance about disposing of dead animals.

Last: Clean up



- remove PPE while outdoors and only touch the cleanest part of each item
- remove protective gear (gloves first and eyewear and mask last), seal disposable items in a bag and place in a general waste bin
- wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds, after removing each item of PPE, and after cleaning up items
  - use soap and clean water to wash hands that are visibly soiled
  - alcohol-based hand rub (sanitiser) can be used on hands that look clean if soap and water are not available.
- clean and disinfect eye protection, shoes, tools and surfaces by:
  - removing visible dirt with water and soap or household detergent
  - disinfecting with a product that is effective against viruses – always follow manufacturer instructions on the label
- wash your clothes on a hot cycle using regular laundry detergent.

If you get sick within 10 days, call your health professional and tell them you have had contact with sick or dead animals.

If you see multiple sick or dead birds or other animals report it via the **Emergency Animal Disease hotline:**

1800 675 888

Find out more at **birdflu.gov.au**

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