



# Media Release

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## **Yakima County Backyard Flock Tests Positive for Avian Influenza**

**Yakima, WA**- A local small backyard flock of chickens tested positive for avian influenza in Yakima County. The Yakima Health District is contacting people with exposure to avian influenza-infected birds to monitor for symptoms as a precautionary measure.

**There are currently no confirmed human cases of avian influenza in Yakima County.**

Human infections are rare, and the risk to the general public remains low.

### **What is Avian Influenza?**

Avian influenza, or bird flu, is caused by Type A influenza viruses found naturally in wild birds. It can spread to other birds and sometimes mammals and may cause serious illness or death in poultry. Migratory birds that pass through Yakima County can carry the virus.

### **Who Is at Higher Risk**

While public risk is low, people with close contact with infected birds or other infected domestic or wild animals may be at higher risk, including:

- [Backyard flock owners](#)
- Animal agricultural workers
- Hunters
- People who work with wildlife, such as wildlife biologists

### **How to Reduce Your Risk of Avian Influenza**

- Do not touch wild birds or animals; observe from a distance. Wild birds and other animals can carry avian influenza even if they appear healthy.
- Avoid contact with sick or dead birds or animals.
- Avoid contact with bird droppings or contaminated surfaces.

- People with job-related exposures to infected birds or other infected animals or their environments should take [additional precautions, including wearing recommended PPE](#).
- [Use extra precautions if you suspect illness in backyard birds.](#)
- [Hunters should practice good hygiene when handling game.](#) Wear disposable gloves when cleaning harvested birds or cleaning bird feeders.
- Prevent pets from having contact with wildlife, and do not feed your pets raw food diets.
- Avoid preparing or eating uncooked or undercooked food or raw dairy products from animals that may be infected with avian influenza.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about getting the seasonal flu vaccine. Although it does not prevent bird flu, it reduces the risk of co-infection with human and avian influenza viruses

### **How to Protect Your Backyard Flock**

If you own backyard birds, you are strongly encouraged to take steps to [protect your flock](#):

- Cover coops and runs to keep wild birds out.
- Wear dedicated clothing and shoes when caring for birds.
- Wash hands before and after handling birds.
- Keep birds away from water sources that wild birds can access.
- Change food and water daily and store feed securely.
- Clean and disinfect equipment regularly.
- Change clothes and clean footwear after visiting other poultry areas.
- Report sick or dead birds to state authorities.

### **Reporting Sick or Dead Birds**

Domestic Birds:

- Report sick/dead **domestic birds** using the [online form](#), or call the Washington State Department of Agriculture's Avian Health Program: 1-800-606-3056. Visit [Avian Influenza | Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) for more information about how to protect backyard flocks.

Wild Birds:

- Use an [online form](#) to report sick/dead **wild birds** suspected of avian influenza to the [Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#).

### **Additional Information:**

[Avian Influenza | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Backyard Poultry | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Avian Influenza \(bird flu\) | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

[Avian Influenza | Washington State Department of Agriculture](#)

[How to Prepare for a Healthy Family and Flock | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) | U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)

[Prevent Avian Influenza: Keep Yourself and Your Family Safe with PPE | Washington State Department of Health](#)

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