

Community Response Partner Network

PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS NEWSLETTER

January 29, 2025



SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER: H5N1 UPDATE

LATEST NEWS

- **A sick snow goose is the first suspected case of bird flu (also known as Avian flu, H5N1, or HPAI) in Philadelphia.**
 - On Saturday, January 11, 2025, a sick snow goose was found on the 1200 block of North 59th Street in West Philadelphia near Carroll Park. This goose has tested positive for bird flu in preliminary testing.
 - This is the first bird found in Philadelphia during the current nationwide outbreak.
 - **Any resident in the area of Carroll Park who may have had direct contact with a sick snow goose in January should call the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Division of Disease Control at 215-685-6742.**
 - Find the latest PDPH press release [here](#).
- **The current outbreak of bird flu** is making wild birds, poultry, milk-producing cows, and other animals sick.
 - There have been 67 confirmed human cases of bird flu due to the current outbreak.
 - There has been one human death related to bird flu in the U.S.
 - The majority of infections of bird flu in people have been due to direct contact with infected poultry or cows.
 - There is still no human-to-human spread of bird flu in the U.S.
- **Stay away from wild birds, especially waterfowl, such as geese and ducks.**
 - Birds can carry the virus even if they do not look sick.
 - If you see a sick bird, stay away from them, and contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission via telephone at 833-PGC-Hunt (833-722-4868), email at pgc_wildlifehealth@pa.gov, or the online [Wildlife Health Survey](#) tool.
- **The risk of bird flu infection in Philadelphia is very low.**
 - However, it's important to follow prevention measures to keep that risk low, especially for people and farm workers who are at higher risk.
- **This is an emerging outbreak. It is important to stay informed about the latest updates and changes.**
 - **Learn more at <https://bit.ly/BirdFlu2025> and the FAQ below.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BIRD FLU (H5N1)

WHAT IS BIRD FLU (H5N1)?

- Bird flu is a viral infection that mainly affects birds but can spread to humans and other animals.
- Bird flu is most common in wild birds, such as geese and ducks, but can also infect poultry, like chickens and turkeys. Sometimes it can make mammals, including milk producing cows and people, sick.

HOW IS BIRD FLU SPREAD?

- Bird flu spreads when sick birds shed the virus in their saliva, mucus, and feces, and then animals and humans come into contact with sick birds or their body fluids.
- It may be possible for humans to get bird flu by being in close contact with a sick bird, or by consuming raw milk, raw cheese or raw meat.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF BIRD FLU IN PEOPLE?

- Conjunctivitis or red eyes
- High fever (often over 100.4°F)
- Severe cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AND OTHERS FROM BIRD FLU?

- **Do NOT drink unpasteurized or raw milk and raw cheese.**
- **Do not touch wild birds, including birds that are hurt.**
 - Avoid direct, unprotected contact with wild birds and other animals that have or may have bird flu.
 - Wild birds can be infected even if they don't look sick.
- **Caregivers should:**
 - Instruct children not to touch wild birds or other animals at places where they may encounter infected animals such as at petting zoos, farms, fairs or school events where live animals may be present.
 - Remind children and caregivers to avoid eating, drinking, biting their nails or touching their face in areas where animals are located.
 - Make sure anyone who touches animals washes their hands with soap and water immediately.
 - Tell your healthcare provider if your child has symptoms and has been in contact with sick birds, wild birds or other animals and if your child has consumed raw milk or raw cheese.
- **Protecting house cats:**
 - Keep cats indoors to prevent exposure to birds and other wildlife.
 - Keep domestic cats away from raw milk and raw pet food.

ARE THERE TIPS FOR RAISING DOMESTIC CHICKENS?

- Domestic chickens are particularly susceptible to bird flu.
- If you care for chickens, here's how to keep them – and you – safe:
 - Prevent contact between your birds and wild fowl.
 - Keep food and water protected and away from wild birds.
 - Change the water at least once a day.
 - Use dedicated coveralls and shoes when taking care of your birds. Change out of them before entering your home.
 - Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, or nose after contact with wild or domestic birds or surfaces and materials that may be contaminated with their saliva, mucous or feces. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
 - Frequently monitor your birds for common signs of illness and immediately isolate any sick ones.
- If you must handle sick poultry or their feces or litter, wear personal protective equipment, such as coveralls, an N95 respirator, and gloves. Dispose of PPE properly and wash hands thoroughly.
- Report your sick birds to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Animal Health and Diagnostic Services (717-772-2852, option 1) and sick or dead wild birds to the Pennsylvania Game Commission (833-PGC-Hunt) immediately. You can also contact the state veterinarian or USDA (866-536-7593). The health department may also ask you to monitor your symptoms over the next 10 days.

CAN I GET SICK WITH BIRD FLU FROM MILK AND EGGS?

- Commercial milk sold in grocery and other food stores is safe to drink because it is pasteurized, which is a process that kills bacteria and viruses.
- Unpasteurized milk, sometimes called raw milk, can carry dangerous bacteria and viruses that can make you very sick and even cause life-threatening illness.
- To help protect you from bird flu and other bacteria or viruses:
 - Avoid drinking and eating any products made with raw milk, like raw cheese.
 - Cook poultry, eggs, and other animal products to the proper temperature, and prevent cross-contamination between raw and cooked food.
 - Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water after handling raw meat and uncooked eggs.

STAY SAFE:

Avoid visiting poultry farms, bird markets, or other places where live poultry are raised, kept, or sold, if possible. Birds can carry H5N1 even if they do not look sick.

Report sick birds or other animals or unusual bird or other animal deaths to the Pennsylvania Game Commission (833-PGC-Hunt), state veterinarian or USDA (866-536-7593).

BIRD FLU ISN'T A BIG RISK IN PHILADELPHIA, BUT IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO BE PROTECTED AND READY IF THINGS CHANGE.

For more information, visit: <https://bit.ly/BirdFlu2025>

COMMUNITY RESPONSE PARTNER NETWORK RESOURCES

PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESOURCES

Learn more about respiratory viruses and people with disabilities.

- Respiratory virus resources: bit.ly/RespVirusResources
- Tailored health promotion materials: bit.ly/CDCHealthPromo

Sign up for ReadyPhiladelphia alerts - text 'ReadyPhila' to 888-777!

- You can receive free text messages on emergencies, such as severe weather.
- Alerts are available in English, French, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Swahili, and American Sign Language (ASL).
- Be the first to know, then share important information with family and neighbors.

Text-to-911 in Philadelphia

- People who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and anyone facing communication barriers can use this service to send an emergency text to 911 in Philly: bit.ly/PATextTo911

COVID-19 RESOURCES

Get free at-home COVID-19 tests!

- Visit a Health Department Resource Hub for testing kits (three kits per person): bit.ly/ResourceHubsPHL. No insurance or ID required.
- Community-based organizations, organizers, venues, and the public can apply to receive 100 free at-home kits and face masks to share with their communities: bit.ly/TestKitDistrib

Free COVID-19 vaccine for uninsured and underinsured Philadelphians:

- To find the most up to date information on COVID vaccination: bit.ly/COVIDvaxPHL

PDPH INFORMATION

Have a question? Contact the Call Center at 215-685-5488.

- The PDPH Call Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am - 5:00PM.
 - Press 3 for interpretation in your language, press 2 for Spanish.
 - Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.

Find us online!

- Health Department website: phila.gov/health
- Health Department social media: facebook.com/phillyhealth and twitter@PHLPublicHealth.

HOW TO STAY CONNECTED

- Sign up at bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse to get essential public health information, then share with your family, friends, and community.
- Questions or suggestions? Email us at publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov or call us at 215-429-3016 with any questions or suggestions.
- To view an archive of past Community Response Partner Network (CRPN) newsletters, visit: bit.ly/PHPOutreachNewsletter.