

# ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## SYMPTOM MONITORING AND ISOLATION GUIDANCE FOR PEOPLE EXPOSED TO NOVEL INFLUENZA A from H5N1

Influenza H5N1 (avian flu) is a disease frequently found in birds caused by an avian influenza virus. Wild birds are regularly infected with avian influenza viruses and sometimes do not show any signs. But they can cause die-offs of certain wild birds, especially waterfowl. These same viruses can be deadly in domesticated poultry such as chickens and turkeys. Humans can be infected with avian influenza if the virus (H5N1) gets into a person's eyes, nose or mouth, or is breathed in. It is important to monitor yourself for symptoms and follow the guidance below if you were exposed to potentially infected animals.

### WHAT IS GOING ON WITH THE CURRENT OUTBREAK OF NOVEL INFLUENZA A from H5N1 in the U.S.?

Since 2021, there has been an outbreak of bird flu in domestic and wild birds caused by Influenza A from H5N1 (H5 bird flu). More recently, Influenza A from H5N1 has been found in some mammal species and has caused an outbreak in dairy cattle. A small number of humans in the US have been infected with H5N1 after close, or lengthy unprotected contact with infected poultry or infected cattle. Most humans have had mild illness and fully recovered, and none passed the infection to other people. In the past two months, there have been two persons (one in Canada and one in the U.S.) in North America who have been hospitalized with influenza A (H5 bird flu).

### WHAT COUNTS AS AN EXPOSURE?

Humans can be exposed to Novel Influenza from H5N1 through close contact with a bird, cow, or other animal infected with H5N1 or by touching objects that sick animals or their saliva, mucous and feces have touched. Drinking raw milk from an infected animal would also be considered an exposure. They could also be exposed to another human with the infection.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'VE BEEN EXPOSED?

Contact the (insert LHD name) at (insert office number) or (insert after hours number) to learn about options for testing and medications to prevent infection. People who have been exposed to bird flu should monitor or watch themselves for symptoms of bird flu **daily while the exposure is ongoing and through the 10 days after exposure**. The first day of the 10-day monitoring or watch period is the first day AFTER you were last exposed to the animal or person with Novel Flu infection.

*Commonly reported symptoms of Novel Influenza A from H5N1 are:*

- Eye tearing, redness or irritation
- Sore Throat
- Headaches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fever (Temperature of 100° F or greater)
- Feeling feverish/Chills
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath

If you've been asked by Public Health to complete a daily symptom survey, please do so in a timely manner. A representative from your local public health department will follow up with you if you don't complete the survey for two or more days. If you seek medical attention without first notifying your local health department, please inform the medical facility you are at, that you have been exposed to Novel Influenza so that they can order the right kind of tests and provide appropriate care and treatment.

*IF YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO H5N1 AND DEVELOP SYMPTOMS, FOLLOW THIS ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE.*