



Health Advice for Service Members Involved in Animal Culling and Disease Management and Eradication Activities

As of 3 January 2007

The Defense Department's mission during this outbreak of avian flu is to preserve combat capabilities and readiness, save lives, reduce human suffering, and slow the spread of infection. DoD personnel have been called on to assist in animal culling and disease management and eradication activities. This includes activities that may expose service members to avian influenza. Military personnel involved in these operations may have an increased risk of acquiring avian influenza via contact with infected poultry through such activities as euthanasia, carcass disposal, and cleaning and disinfection of areas affected by avian influenza.

Here are some recommendations from military health experts on ways to reduce your risk of contracting avian flu during this operation:

Wear Personal Protective Equipment

Always wear the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) issued to you for this operation. PPE should be worn at all times when working in an infected or potentially infected environment. PPE should be removed before entering clean areas, and should be disposed of safely. PPE should always include:

- Heavy-duty rubber gloves that can be disinfected or disposable nitrile or vinyl gloves. To protect against hand irritation, a thin cotton glove can be worn inside the external gloves.
- Protective clothing, preferably disposable outer garments or coveralls, plus an impermeable apron.
- Rubber or polyurethane over boots that can be cleaned or disposable protective shoe covers.
- Safety goggles
- Fit-tested, disposable particulate respirator (N-95 or higher).

Receive Protective Medicines

Vaccines and antiviral drugs are required for all service members involved in animal culling and disease management and eradication activities. These drugs can help prevent, reduce the severity of infection, or treat avian flu in humans.

- Unvaccinated personnel should receive the current season's influenza vaccine.
- Personnel should receive an influenza antiviral drug daily for the duration of the time of potential exposure.

Practice Basic Infection Control Techniques

Take common sense steps to limit the spread of flu germs. Hand washing is a simple way to prevent the spread of infection.

- Wash hands immediately following direct contact with infected or exposed poultry, contact with contaminated surfaces, or after removal of protective gloves.
- If hand washing stations are not available, use appropriate waterless hand washing solution.

Monitor Your Health

Be aware of your own health! Prompt self-diagnosis of flu symptoms could be critical to appropriate treatment. It can also reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to others.

- For one week following your exposure to infected or exposed birds or a potentially contaminated environment, be vigilant for the development of fever, respiratory symptom, and/or eye infection.
- Monitor your temperature daily. One of the earliest signs of infection is a high fever (over 101 degrees F).
- Individuals who become ill should report to a health care provider. If possible, the provider should be notified prior to arrival or immediately on arrival that the individual might have been exposed to avian influenza.