



Protect Yourself Avian Flu Healthcare Workers

Avian flu is a viral disease and it can be very contagious and even deadly in poultry (e.g., chickens). Of great concern are the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 viruses that have killed millions of birds and infected humans in other countries. If these viruses are detected in the U.S., take appropriate precautions. In addition, patients who have traveled within 10 days in a country with avian flu activity and who are hospitalized with a severe feverish respiratory illness, or who are otherwise being evaluated for avian flu, should be isolated using the following precautions.

Standard Precautions

- Wash hands carefully for 15-20 seconds before and after all patient contact, or contact with surfaces potentially contaminated with respiratory secretions.

Contact Precautions

- Use gloves and gown for all patient contact.
- Use disposable equipment (blood pressure cuffs, thermometers) or equipment that can be disinfected before use with another patient (e.g., stethoscopes).

Droplet Precautions

- Wear goggles/face shields within 3 feet of the patient.

Airborne Precautions

- The patient should be placed in an airborne infection isolation room.
- If such a room is unavailable, portable HEPA filters should be used.
- Use at least a disposable N95 respirator when in the isolation room or other room containing the patient and especially when engaged in high-risk aerosol generating procedures.

Transmission Prevention Strategies

- Group infected patients in the same room if private rooms are not available.
- Minimize transportation of patients outside the room.
- Limit the number of employees caring for patients.
- Limit the number of visitors to patients.

Additional Guidance

- Get the seasonal influenza vaccine. If you develop flu-like symptoms, stay at home except to get medical attention.
- Avian and human flu symptoms are similar.

For more complete information:

 Occupational
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U.S. Department of Labor
www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA

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