

HPAI in Michigan: Farm Worker Protection and What You Need to Know

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1, a type of bird flu, is a virus primarily spread by birds that can also be transmitted on vehicles, by people, and other means. HPAI causes illness in poultry, dairy cows, livestock, and other wildlife.

While risk to humans is low, poultry, dairy, and livestock farm workers may be at higher risk due to potential exposures to infected animals or contaminated materials at work.



Protect yourself by wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) when working with sick or dead animals, animal feces, litter, milk, or materials known to be or potentially contaminated with HPAI. These precautions reduce your risk of exposure and the likelihood of passing the virus onto unaffected animals.

Symptoms in humans: Fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle aches, redness/swelling in the eyes and eyelids, and diarrhea

- Workers should follow proper biosecurity procedures outlined by their facility.
- Use additional precautions if you must move farm to farm, or from a pen of affected animals to a pen of unaffected animals.
- If you are sick, seek immediate medical attention and report your symptoms to your local health department.

Learn more about highly pathogenic avian influenza at michigan.gov/birdflu

What You Can Do To Prevent HPAI Transmission

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Wash hands with soap and water, then put on PPE in this order:

1. Fluid-resistant coveralls.
2. Waterproof apron, if needed for job task.
3. N95 filtering facepiece respirator or elastomeric half-mask respirator.
4. Safety goggles or face shield.
5. Head or hair cover.
6. Gloves.
7. Boots.

While wearing PPE:

- Use separate designated clean areas, one for putting on PPE and one for taking off PPE.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose after touching any contaminated material.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke, vape, chew gum, dip tobacco, or use the bathroom.

Follow these steps to safely remove PPE:

1. Remove the apron.
2. Clean and disinfect boots.
3. Remove boots.
4. Remove coveralls.
5. Remove gloves.
6. Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
7. Remove goggles or face shield and then remove respirator.
8. Remove head cover or hair cover.
9. Wash hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.

After removing PPE:

- Shower at the end of the work shift.
- Leave all contaminated clothing and equipment at work.
- Watch for symptoms of illness while you are working with potentially sick animals or materials.
- If you get sick during or within 10 days after, tell your supervisor and talk with a doctor.

Reusable and disposable PPE:

- While removing PPE, dispose of all disposable PPE appropriately and set aside reusable PPE.
 - Clean and disinfect reusable PPE after every use.
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