

# Avian Influenza

## 1. What is Avian Influenza?

Avian influenza is also known as “bird flu.” It’s a virus that can infect domestic (in the home) birds and wild birds such as chickens, turkeys, geese, and ducks. Strains (types) of avian influenza are considered low pathogenic (causing disease) (LPAI) or highly pathogenic (HPAI) depending on the severity of illness they cause in birds. A few strains have been found to infect humans. Some of these strains include ones called H5N1, H7N9, H7N7 and H9N2. Strains infecting only birds have the potential to mutate (change) and become infectious to people. This is why it’s important to monitor all strains of the virus (germ) in birds.

## 2. Has avian influenza infected people in LA County?

No, but strains of HPAI that infected birds were found in California in the winter of 2014-2015. These viruses didn’t cause illness in people. It’s important to monitor our local birds for influenza because these viruses may return to California in the future.

## 3. What symptoms should I look out for in birds?

Birds can become infected without showing any signs of illness. Examples of these birds include migratory waterfowl like wild ducks and wild geese. In some cases, birds may show signs such as:

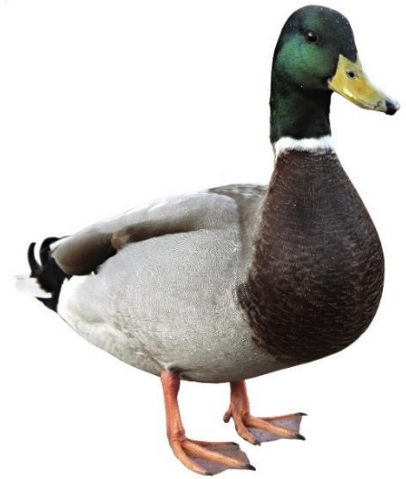
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Diarrhea
- Lack of energy or appetite
- Difficulty breathing and walking
- Swelling of the legs and head
- Sometimes sudden death

## 4. How is Avian Influenza spread?

The virus can be spread quickly and easily by direct bird-to-bird contact. Waterfowl like ducks and geese are potential sources for spreading disease to other types of birds. Avian influenza can be spread through direct contact with birds. This includes touching their feathers, saliva, or feces (poop). Bird feces on equipment, clothes, shoes, or hands can also spread it from place to place.

## 5. What should I do if I see sick or dead birds in LA County?

If you see a sick or dead bird, report the type of birds and how many you saw to the Veterinary Public Health Program at **213-989-7060**. Don’t touch the birds directly with your bare hands and avoid stepping in bird feces.



### Report Dead Birds

**Los Angeles County Veterinary  
Public Health Program:**

(213) 989-7060  
[vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:vet@ph.lacounty.gov)

Online Reporting:  
[tinyurl.com/LADeadBird](http://tinyurl.com/LADeadBird)

### For more information:

**Los Angeles County, Department  
of Public Health**

[publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/AI.htm](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/AI.htm)

**Centers for Disease Control and  
Prevention (CDC)**

[cdc.gov/flu/avian-in-birds.htm](http://cdc.gov/flu/avian-in-birds.htm)