

On behalf of the Washtenaw County Health Department, please read the following message for important information regarding bird flu. Please share this message with any local, related groups to which you may belong (i.e., chicken farmers, poulterers) so others in your community receive this information.

Washtenaw County Health Department is reaching out to make sure local residents with backyard flocks have information about bird flu (also known as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza or HPAI). Information is posted here <https://bit.ly/wchdai>.

The risk to the general public is low at this time, and the [Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development](#) is handling the statewide response. If there are human exposures or cases locally, the Washtenaw County Health Department will become more actively involved.

**Specifically, backyard poultry owners should implement the following enhanced measures to protect their flocks:**

- Restrict access: Limit visitor access to bird areas and ensure anyone entering uses proper protective equipment.
- Disinfect equipment: Regularly clean and disinfect tools, clothing, and vehicles that come into contact with birds.
- Monitor flock health: Observe birds daily for signs of illness, such as sudden death, nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, or a significant drop in egg production.
- Report illnesses: If you suspect bird flu, contact MDARD immediately at 800-292-3939 or (for after-hours emergencies) 517-373-0440.

Here are those [flock protection measures in a flyer](#).

In addition, if you handle sick or dead birds, see the [recommended precautions](#) on our website and monitor yourself for symptoms of flu (for example, fever, cough, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, etc.). While transmission is unlikely, if you experience these symptoms, stay home away from others and call your health care provider. Let your provider know you may have been exposed to birds so they can determine the appropriate testing, if necessary.

Additionally, the Washtenaw County Health Department's Communications Administrator/Public Information Officer sent an email to the L-LUG list (Local Units of Government) on February 24 with an update on bird flu as there were increased reports of dead waterfowl in the county. I can share this information as well if not received.

Thank you!

**Sally Boerma**

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Washtenaw County  
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