



# Avian influenza

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## What is Avian Influenza?

Avian influenza (AI), also known as bird flu, is a viral infection of domestic poultry and other wild birds, such as migrating waterfowl, sea birds, corvids and birds of prey. Poultry includes chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, pigeon (bred for meat), partridge, quail, guinea fowl and pheasants.

## What are the clinical signs of AI?

Increased mortality, unusual behavior, breathing difficulties, neurological signs such as shaking or incoordination, decreased eating/drinking, decreased egg production, thin or misshapen egg shells.

## How is it spread?

The virus is transmitted between individual birds by eating or drinking feed/water contaminated by bird faeces or by inhalation of the virus. It can also be spread due to introduction of diseased birds to the flock or via poor biosecurity of poultry keepers, such as a lack of cleaning and disinfection and inappropriate pest control.



## Can AI infect humans?

Avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds, but it can affect humans and other mammals. The risk to the general public's health is very low. It also poses a very low food safety risk for consumers - properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

If within the first 10 days from the last time you were exposed to a potentially infected bird, you develop flu like symptoms (fever, cough, muscle aches, runny nose) please isolate from the rest of your household and contact your GP by phone (do not attend in person). Please let them know that you may have been exposed to avian flu and have now developed symptoms. Your GP may wish to contact the States Veterinary Officer and/or Public Health Services for further discussion.

## What do I do if I find a sick or dead bird?

If you come across a **sick wild bird**, please do not touch it and contact the GSPCA (01481 257261).

If you come across any **dead birds of prey, corvids or sick/dead poultry** you must not touch them and contact the States Vets for bird flu testing (01481 221161, [svo@gov.gg](mailto:svo@gov.gg)). We will require the following information:

- Location of the bird(s), including what3words if possible.
- Type of bird(s) (if known)
- Contact details should we need to call you back.

If **any sea birds/garden birds/pigeons** are found dead on your property, the following disposal method should be adhered to:

- Note if the bird is ringed, if yes, please note down the ring number, date and location the bird was found and inform the States Vets (contact details above).
- If possible, wear disposable protective gloves when picking up and handling dead wild birds (if disposable gloves are not available, a plastic bag can be used as a make-shift glove).
- Place the dead wild bird in a suitable plastic bag, preferably leak proof. Care should be taken not to contaminate the outside of the bag.
- Tie the bag and place it in a second plastic bag.
- Remove gloves by turning them inside out and then place them in the second plastic bag.
- Tie the bag and dispose of it in the normal household refuse bin.



Please note that **dead sea birds found on the shoreline** will no longer be collected and disposed of unless found in large quantities. It is still advised to notify the States Vets and avoid any contact with these birds, including dogs.

## How can I register my poultry?

### Register with the States Veterinary Officers

1. Follow this [link](#) to complete our online form.
2. Email [svo@gov.gg](mailto:svo@gov.gg) or call (01481) 221161 and provide the following information:
  - Name,
  - Address,
  - Contact details (phone number, email address),
  - Type of birds kept,
  - Number of birds kept,
  - Address where poultry are located, if different to the home address.
3. Write a letter with the above information and post/deliver to:

States Veterinary Officers,  
Burnt Lane House,  
Longue Rue,  
St Martins,  
GY4 6LD.

  - If you have already voluntarily registered your poultry, there is no need to re-register.
  - Should any of the information change (e.g. number/type of birds kept), please inform the States Vets of these changes.
  - The Office *for the* Environment and Infrastructure will use this information to contact you if there is a disease outbreak or if there are any other animal health/welfare concerns that you should be made aware of.
    - For details on how we will use your data please see our [Fair Processing Notice](#).

## What biosecurity measures should I put in place?

Biosecurity measures are actions that are taken to prevent damage from biological threats, such as avian influenza virus.

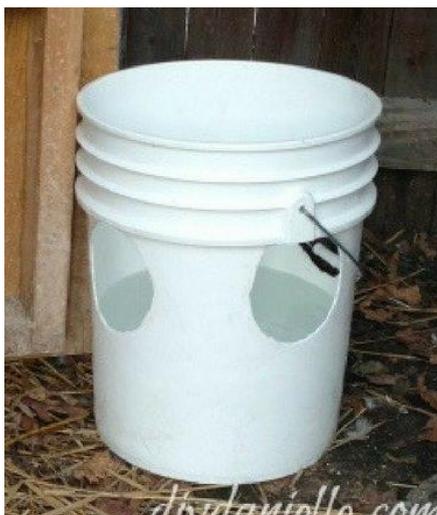
### Good biosecurity measures to keep your poultry safe:

- **Housing birds** – Poultry owners will need to decide if the welfare risks associated with housing their flocks are unacceptable based upon their facilities and current environmental conditions.
  - If you do not have a purpose built building you could use a garden shed, garage or polytunnel (provided there is adequate light and ventilation).



- Block up any gaps in poultry housing with boards or netting to avoid any wild birds getting in.
- If it is not possible to house birds, you could **separate them from wild birds** in a netted enclosure and **ensure that feed and water is kept indoors/covered** (see details below).
- Keep chickens and turkeys **housed separately** from ducks, geese and game birds.
- Make your premises **unattractive to wild birds**:
  - Use visual scarers e.g. foils, streamers, lasers, kites
  - Drain wet patches and areas of standing water to deter wild waterfowl
  - Net/cover ponds
  - Fence off ponds, streams, standing water or wet/boggy areas from your poultry
  - Remove any wild bird feed sources
- **Reduce movement** of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry are kept.
- **Store feed and bedding inside** to reduce the risk of contamination.
- **Clean and disinfect** – footwear, hard surfaces, equipment and vehicles.
  - Place foot dips and boot brushes containing [Defra-approved disinfectant](#) (e.g. Jeyes Fluid) at the entrance and exit of all houses/outdoor areas where poultry are kept.
  - Use alternative footwear when entering poultry areas.
- Ensure **pest control** is effective.

Below are some great examples of ways in which you can keep feed/water covered to avoid contamination from wild bird faeces.



Ensure that the bucket has a lid on



Jerry-can with holes cut in the side



Duck waterer



Treadle feeders

Further biosecurity guidance from Defra can be found [here](#).

## Poultry Imports

- All poultry imports from the UK require an import licence while the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone is in place – you can apply for a licence [here](#).
- Imported poultry must never have resided within an avian influenza restricted zone for any period of time.
- Imported poultry must never come into contact with wild or infected birds, directly or indirectly, during transport.
- Imported poultry should be kept in isolation from other poultry for 2 weeks and any deaths during this period must be reported to the States Veterinary Officers.
- Follow this [link](#) for a map of avian influenza outbreaks.

## Events

- If you wish to hold or carry out any show, display, fair, exhibition, competition or other event involving any gathering of poultry please contact the States Vets.

## Pigeons, birds of prey & game birds

- Pigeons or birds of prey can be flown at the owner's risk, but keepers should try to prevent them from making direct contact with (or catching) wildfowl.
- Keepers of captive game birds must continue to implement minimum biosecurity requirements measures at all times.