

# Protecting Backyard Flocks from Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)



Avian Influenza (bird flu) is a disease caused by the influenza A viruses. It is spread naturally through wild birds (mostly waterfowl), but most show no signs of illness.

## Ways to Protect Your Flock



Cover chicken coops and runs to prevent co-mingling with waterfowl.



Wear dedicated boots/clothes when tending to flocks.



Keep all birds in the coop to prevent contamination with waterfowl droppings.



Wash hands before and after working with birds.



Remove bird feeders & baths used by wild birds.



Change food and water daily.



Clean and disinfect equipment in contact with bird droppings.



After visiting places where other bird owners congregate, clean your boots/clothes before caring for your birds.

## Warning Signs

- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production or softened/misshaped eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids and comb
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs & legs
- Stumbling, falling down, diarrhea
- Sudden death

## Transmission in Birds

- Foot traffic
- Secretions from birds' mouths, nostrils, eyes, excrement
- Contact with infected droppings
- Movement of infected birds
- Contaminated clothing & equipment

If you have sick or dying birds in your backyard flock:

- Don't touch sick or dead birds, their feces or litter, or any surface or water source that might be contaminated without wearing [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#).
- Contact New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health to report sick or dead poultry: 609-671-6400, [state.veterinarian@ag.nj.gov](mailto:state.veterinarian@ag.nj.gov) or fill out the [online form](#).