

Avian Influenza Outbreak Overview

Avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds, and the risk to the general public's health is very low. Bird flu poses a very low food safety risk. Properly cooked eggs and poultry are safe to eat. The disease is a major concern to the poultry industry, and so extra measures are needed to prevent the spread of the disease.

People who keep poultry or captive birds (such as budgies / parrots etc) within 10km of the infected premise have to take special measures to help prevent further spread of the disease. For example, all birds must be housed and they cannot be moved while the restrictions are in place. Full details on the restrictions are available at www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu. The restrictions will be in place for at least a month from the date of the confirmed case. If you have any questions about the restrictions our Animal Health Team can help you.

Road signs will be put into place to let people know that they are entering the animal disease zone and there is a map to check at www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu. You might see some increased presence from the Council or the Animal and Plant Health Agency, but it is nothing to be concerned about. They are trying to find out who keeps poultry in the area to let them know about the new restrictions and to provide information and advice.

If you keep poultry and caged birds, please take care to follow the new restrictions. Please don't worry - there is no automatic culling (destroying) policy. You might receive a visit from a vet to make sure your birds are fit and healthy. If you have any concerns about the health of your birds, seek prompt advice from your vet as usual.

It is fine to still visit people who keep poultry and caged birds, but they will want you to keep away from their livestock to prevent the risk of spreading avian flu from wild birds to caged birds.

If you do happen to find any dead or sick birds, please don't touch them. If you find dead swans, geese or ducks or other dead wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, you should report them to the Defra helpline on [03459 33 55 77](tel:03459335577)

It is still safe to feed wild birds, unless you are a poultry keeper. It is extremely unlikely that bird flu could be transmitted to people by feeding birds in the garden. But birds can carry a variety of diseases, such as salmonella and so you should wash your hands with soap and water after handling bird feeders, cleaning bird baths or feeding birds. Bird feeders should be washed and cleaned regularly to prevent spread of diseases such as salmonella. This should be done outside in your garden with dilute disinfectant (normal household bleach diluted 1:20).