

H5N1 Virus Guidance for Farm Workers

H5N1 is a virus that causes what is known as the “bird flu.” People can get sick with the bird flu when they come into contact with infected birds or animals.



Symptoms of the bird flu can include:

Eye redness (conjunctivitis), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, trouble breathing, and fever.

How to protect yourself:

1

Wear protective clothing when working with sick or dead animals, feces, or milk.



2

Wash your hands thoroughly throughout the day and before eating. Avoid touching your face and mouth.



3

Do not drink raw or unpasteurized milk. You could get sick from drinking milk from sick cows.



What to do if you are exposed or feel sick:

If you were exposed to the H5N1 virus, you should monitor your symptoms for 10 days since the time you were exposed.

If you start to feel sick and have symptoms of H5N1, you should isolate away from other people right away and get tested by a healthcare professional. They will also provide medicine for you and other people you live with to help kill the virus.

For questions about H5N1 or how to get tested:

Call the South Dakota DOH Help Line: 1.800.592.1861

Exposure Level

Protective Equipment Recommendations

High Risk Exposure

- Working with sick or dead animals on affected farms (ie. caring for cattle in the sick pen, depopulating poultry)
- Work in milking parlors or contact with raw milk such as on farms with animals infected with H5N1 bird flu (affected farms)

Respirator mask, coveralls,
safety goggles, boots,
disposable gloves, headcover

Medium Risk Exposure

- Work with healthy non-lactating animals on farms affected by H5N1
- Animal contact on unaffected farms but in an area with infected animals in the region

Respirator mask, safety
goggles, disposable gloves

Low Risk Exposure

- Work that does not involve direct contact with animals, or only includes animal contact in areas without any animals affected by H5N1

Basic farm-specific clothing and
gear (No enhanced
requirement for protective
equipment)



H5 Bird Flu: Current Situation



Interim Guidance for Employers to
Reduce Exposure to Novel Influenza A
(Such as H5N1 Bird Flu) for People
Working with or Exposed to Animals



Influenza A (H5N1) in Cattle