

New Recommendations for Protecting Yourself from H5N1 Influenza



Avian influenza H5N1 (sometimes called H5N1 bird flu or bird flu) continues to be widespread in wild birds and outbreaks are occurring among dairy cattle herds and commercial poultry facilities.

H5N1 influenza doesn’t usually infect humans, but since the start of the 2024 outbreak, there have been more human cases than expected. Some people who work on farms have been infected with H5N1 influenza **but didn’t know they were infected**. This is because they had no symptoms or very mild symptoms.

The tables below include recommendations for employers and employees to protect against H5N1 influenza.

If you work in a high or medium exposure setting, you should wear personal protective equipment. The type of personal protective equipment (PPE) you should wear depends on your work tasks and if there are cases of H5N1 influenza on your farm or in your region.

Rhode Island is making select types of PPE (Tyvek suits, gloves, face shields, and N95 masks) available at no cost to people who work on poultry farms, on dairy farms, and in slaughterhouses to protect them against H5N1. Farmers and others managing animals at potential risk for H5N1 may request PPE by completing [this ordering form](#).

High Exposure		
High Exposure Settings and Tasks	What Employers Should Do	What Employees Should Do
<p>You work in poultry culling, a milking parlor, raw milk processing, or a slaughterhouse</p> <p>AND you work with animals known to be infected with H5N1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure there is proper ventilation and fresh air in barns.• Regularly clean and maintain ventilation systems.• Watch for sick or dead animals at your farm or workplace.• Develop plans to watch workers for illness.• Train workers on infection control, flu symptoms, and how to put on, use, and take off PPE.• Work with RIDOH to access testing and treatment for people.	<p>Wear PPE for high exposure settings and tasks. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NIOSH-approved particulate respirator,• Fluid-resistant coveralls,• Safety goggles,• Boot covers or boots,• Head or hair cover, and• Disposable gloves.

Share these resources with employees:

- [Personal Protective Equipment for HIGH EXPOSURE Settings](#)
- (Español) [Use equipo de protección personal](#)
- [How to Put On Personal Protective Equipment for HIGH EXPOSURE Settings](#)
- (Español) [Póngase el equipo de protección personal de forma segura – Exposición alta](#)
- [How to Take Off Personal Protective Equipment for HIGH EXPOSURE Settings](#)
- (Español) [Quítese el equipo de protección personal de forma segura – Exposición alta](#)



Medium Exposure		
Medium Exposure Settings and Tasks	What Employers Should Do	What Employees Should Do
<p>You work with healthy animals (that do not produce milk)</p> <p>AND there are animals on site or on farms nearby that are infected with H5N1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is proper ventilation and fresh air in barns. • Regularly clean and maintain ventilation systems. • Watch for sick or dead animals at your farm or workplace. • Develop plans to watch workers for illness. • Train workers on infection control, flu symptoms, and how to put on, use, and take off PPE. • Work with RIDOH to access testing and treatment people. 	<p>Wear PPE for high exposure settings and tasks. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIOSH-approved particulate respirator, • Safety goggles, and • Disposable gloves with optional outer work gloves.

Share these resources with employees:

- [Use Personal Protective Equipment Safely in MEDIUM EXPOSURE Settings](#)
- (Español) [Póngase y quítese el equipo de protección personal de forma segura – Exposición moderada](#)

Low Exposure		
Low Exposure Settings and Tasks	What Employers Should Do	What Employees Should Do
<p>Your work does not include any direct contact with animals</p> <p>OR your work includes direct contact with animals but there are no reports of H5N1 in your area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans to watch workers for illness. • Train workers on infection control, flu symptoms, and how to put on, use, and take off PPE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for symptoms of H5N1 (like fever, chills, body aches, cough and red or swollen eyes). • Tell your supervisor and doctor if you are sick.

