



Public Health Brief

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Note: Read my notes at the end for application of this information to Alpine County.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: media@cdph.ca.gov

State Reports Single, Possible Case of Bird Flu Virus in Child with Mild Symptoms

No person-to-person spread of the virus has been detected or is suspected; Risk to public remains low

What You Need to Know: California has identified a possible bird flu case in a child who has had mild respiratory symptoms and is recovering at home. Human infections with bird flu viruses are rare, and no person-to-person spread has been detected in California or the United States.

SACRAMENTO – California has identified a possible bird flu case in a child in Alameda County who was tested for mild upper respiratory symptoms. The child, who has been treated, is recovering at home. They had no known contact with an infected animal, but public health experts are investigating a possible exposure to wild birds.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is working with local public health officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to investigate the cause of the initial positive test in the child. The positive test showed a low-level detection of the virus, indicating the child was not likely infectious to others. Repeat bird flu testing on the child four days later was negative, and additional testing shows the child was also positive for respiratory viruses that could be the cause of their cold and flu symptoms. The test specimens are being sent to CDC for confirmatory testing.



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Family Members Tested Negative

No person-to-person spread of the virus has been detected or is suspected. Due to mild respiratory symptoms, all close family members of the child were tested – and all are negative for bird flu and not suspected of having the virus at all. Family members were also confirmed to have the same, more common respiratory viruses as the child. They are also being treated with preventive medication.

Additional Contacts Involved, No Indication of Larger Outbreak

Out of an abundance of caution, other individuals who had contact with the child are being notified and offered preventive treatment and testing. Public health officials are aware that the child attended daycare with mild symptoms before the child's test was reported as a possible bird flu infection. Local public health officials have reached out to potentially exposed caregivers and families to conduct health checks for symptoms and offer connections to preventive treatment and testing if they develop symptoms.

"It's natural for people to be concerned, and we want to reinforce for parents, caregivers and families that based on the information and data we have, we don't think the child was infectious – and no human-to-human spread of bird flu has been documented in any country for more than 15 years," said **CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Tomás Aragón.**

Bird Flu in Humans is Rare

Human infections with bird flu viruses are rare, and no person-to-person spread has been detected in California or the United States. In the rare cases where bird flu has spread from one person to another, it has never spread beyond a few close contacts.

Limited and sporadic human infections with bird flu where there is not clear route of exposure or infection are expected and have occurred in the past and during the outbreak public health officials have been monitoring since 2022. Regardless, public health surveillance and investigations of such cases will continue at the local, state and federal levels to monitor for any concerning changes.

People Working with Infected Animals are at Higher Risk

People who have contact with infected dairy cows, poultry, or wildlife have a greater chance of getting bird flu, which can happen if the virus gets into a person's eyes, nose, mouth, or is inhaled. As a general precaution, whenever possible people should avoid direct contact with



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sick or dead wild birds, poultry, and other animals and observe them only from a distance.

Since early October, California has reported 26 confirmed human cases of bird flu, all following direct contact with infected dairy cows. To date, all have reported mild symptoms (primarily eye infections), and none have been hospitalized. Because bird flu viruses can change and gain the ability to spread more easily between people, public health officials have provided preventive measures and are monitoring animal and human infections carefully.

CDPH has been [closely monitoring the bird flu situation](#) in both animals and humans since the state's first detection in poultry in 2022. To protect public health, and especially workers who may be exposed to infected animals, CDPH encourages those who work with infected dairy cows, raw milk, or infected poultry to use protective gear. Individuals who have symptoms or a significant exposure (such as raw milk splashing into the eye) should get tested quickly and treatment. In humans, bird flu symptoms include eye redness or discharge, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, diarrhea, vomiting, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, trouble breathing, and fever.

Public health experts also encourage farm workers to get a flu shot this year. While a seasonal flu shot doesn't stop bird flu, it protects against severe illness from seasonal flu and reduces the chance of human and bird flu viruses mixing and turning into new viruses that can spread more easily or be more severe.

Pasteurized Milk Products are Safe to Consume

Pasteurized milk and dairy products are safe to consume. Drinking raw milk or eating raw milk products could be dangerous. Reduce your risk by choosing pasteurized milk and dairy foods like cheese and yogurt. Pasteurization, the process of heating milk to specific temperatures for certain times, inactivates the bird flu virus and harmful germs that can be found in raw milk.

For the latest information on the national bird flu response, see [CDC's Bird Flu Response Update](#).

www.cdph.ca.gov

Note:

The Alpine County Public Health Clinic is available in Woodfords and does have the ability to test for the influenza A virus in someone with “flu-like symptoms”. If any test is positive, we will immediately arrange for more detailed typing of the virus to identify whether or not it is the H5 highly pathogenic avian influenza (bird flu) that we are all concerned about. Please contact us for an appointment or questions at 530-694-2146, Option 2 for the clinic, to make an appointment, Option 1 to talk to Dr. Johnson (He will return your call within 24 hours.).



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