

First H5 Bird Flu Death Reported in United States

No person-to-person bird flu transmission spread has been identified, and CDC says the risk to the general public remains low.

January 9, 2025 By Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is saddened by Louisiana's report that a person previously hospitalized with severe avian influenza A(H5N1) illness ("H5N1 bird flu") has passed away.

While tragic, a death from H5N1 bird flu in the United States is not unexpected because of the known potential for infection with these viruses to cause severe illness and death.

As of January 6, 2025, there have been 66 confirmed human cases of H5N1 bird flu in the United States since 2024 and 67 since 2022. This is the first person in the United States who has died as a result of an H5 infection. Outside the United States, more than 950 cases of H5N1 bird flu have been reported to the [World Health Organization](#); about half of those have resulted in death.

CDC has carefully studied the available information about the person who died in Louisiana and continues to assess that the risk to the general public remains low. Most importantly, no person-to-person transmission spread has been identified.

As with the case in Louisiana, most H5 bird flu infections are related to animal-to-human exposures. Additionally, there are no concerning virologic changes actively spreading in wild birds, poultry, or cows that would raise the risk to human health. (CDC reported previously on its [analysis of the viruses isolated from the patient in Louisiana](#).) However, people with job-related or recreational exposures to infected birds or other animals are at greater risk of infection. For these and others, CDC has developed [prevention resources about how to protect yourself](#).

CDC is continually:

- Supporting critical epidemiologic investigations with state and local partners to assess the public health impact of each H5 case.
- Working closely with state and local partners to conduct active surveillance for H5 cases.

- Monitoring for changes that might suggest H5 viruses are becoming better adapted to mammals and therefore might spread more easily from animals-to-humans or human-to-human or cause more severe disease.
- Monitoring for any viral changes that could make these viruses less responsive to flu antiviral medications or the available candidate vaccine viruses.

Additional information about H5 bird flu is available on the [CDC website](#).

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<http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/first-h5-bird-flu-death-reported-united-states>