

How to keep your birds safe from Avian Influenza

Measures in Avian Influenza Prevention Zone – from 17 March 2017

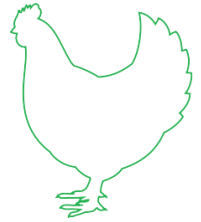


Avian Influenza, also known as bird flu, is a disease that affects all types of poultry including chickens, ducks and geese. A severe strain of the disease, H5N8, has been found in wild and captive birds in the UK.

Poultry keepers across Northern Ireland are currently required to take action to reduce the risk of disease spreading. This guide is designed to help keepers of small flocks of poultry look after their birds and protect them from disease

How bird flu spreads

Bird flu can be passed from wild birds to poultry, causing birds to fall ill and die. It can be transmitted directly from bird to bird or via the environment, for example in wild bird droppings. The virus can survive in the environment for at least 50 days in cooler weather.



This means if you keep poultry, including chickens, ducks or geese, even as pets, you must take action to prevent direct and indirect contact with wild birds.

Risks to human health are very low and bird flu does not pose a food safety risk.

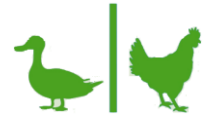
Biosecurity measures for ALL bird keepers

All poultry keepers, even if their birds are inside, **must** follow these steps to reduce the risk of infection via the environment, for example in wild bird droppings:

- **Keep food and water supplies inside** where they cannot be contaminated, feed birds inside and keep them away from standing water.
- **Keep the area where your birds live clean and tidy**, removing spilled feed.
- **Put foot baths and a boot brush** with a DAERA approved disinfectant at the entrance to all areas where birds are kept.



- **Minimise movement** in or out of your birds' enclosure
- **Keep domestic waterfowl (ducks, geese etc) separate from poultry.**
- **Use dedicated or disposable footwear** when accessing bird enclosure. Change clothes and boots and wash hands before and after visiting poultry.
- **Regularly clean and disinfect equipment used in bird areas.**
- **Make sure you have effective vermin control** in the area where your poultry are kept



Additional measures if you let your birds outside

From 17 March a new Prevention Zone comes into force which requires all keepers in Northern Ireland to take action to protect their birds

The safest option to minimise contact between your poultry and wild birds is to keep them inside or under netting.

However, you can choose to let your poultry outside provided you have taken some additional steps to minimise the risk of infection from wild birds before you do so:

- **Make sure outdoor areas are fully fenced** so birds cannot roam outside them, and any ponds or water areas are netted and covered.



- **Regularly check your property for wild birds** and take steps to discourage any you find – you might want to think about visual bird-scarers.
- **Remove any feeders and water stations** from the outside area, or make sure they are covered to sufficiently restrict access by wild birds
- **Regularly clean and disinfect hard areas** like concrete walkways that your poultry have access to.
- **Inspect outdoor areas**, removing obvious wild bird contaminants like carcasses, faeces and feathers



Signs of Avian Flu include loss of appetite, swollen heads and respiratory problems. **If you suspect bird flu call the DAERA helpline on 0300 200 7840.**



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Register your flock

By law you must register your flock with the Department.

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/bird-registration-form

Further details can be found at www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/avian-influenza-ai