

Biosecurity For Birds: Keeping Your Birds Healthy

Here are three simple steps that will help keep your birds free of disease. We call this three-step process “backyard biosecurity.” Backyard biosecurity means doing everything you can to protect your birds from disease. **Follow these three steps and you will be helping to protect your birds and those of your neighbors.**



LOOK

Know the warning signs of bird diseases such as avian influenza (AI) or “bird flu” and exotic Newcastle disease or END. While it may be hard to tell if your bird has one of these diseases, if you know the signs, you may be able to tell if something is wrong. Early detection can help prevent the spread of disease.

- Sudden increase in bird deaths in your flock (more than normal)
- Sneezing, gasping for air, coughing, and/or runny nose
- Watery and green diarrhea
- Lack of energy and poor appetite
- Drop in egg production or soft- or thin-shelled, misshapen eggs
- Swelling around the eyes, neck, and head
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs, and legs (AI)
- Tremors, drooping wings, circling, twisting of the head and neck, or lack of movement (END)

Early detection is important to prevent the spread of disease.



REPORT

Don't wait. If your birds are sick or dying, call the **toll-free hotline 1-866-536-7593**. You will be put in touch with a **local connection**. If followup is needed, there is no charge for this service.

You can also call

- Your local cooperative extension office
- Your veterinarian
- The State Veterinarian or State animal/poultry diagnostic laboratory

Toll-free hotline

1-866-536-7593



You are the best protection your birds have.



PROTECT

When it comes to protecting your birds from disease, there are two things to keep in mind. **Keep It Clean** and **Keep It Away**

Keep It CLEAN

If you practice these steps and make them part of your bird care routine, you will be doing a lot to help the health of your flock.

These are a few important things to remember:

- **Wash your hands thoroughly before entering your bird area and before working with your birds.**
- **Clean cages and change food and water daily.**
- **Clean and disinfect equipment** that comes in contact with your birds or their droppings, including cages and tools.
- Make sure to **clean off all dirt and manure** before you disinfect.
- If you do borrow tools or cages, clean and disinfect them before they reach your property.
- **Scrub your shoes with disinfectant.** This may seem like too much work, but your boots and shoes can easily track disease to your birds. Or keep a separate pair of shoes or boots near your cages to wear only when working with your birds.
- **Wear clean clothes** that you use only when you feed and care for your birds.

Keep it AWAY

Restrict access to your property and your birds. Wild birds or new birds you've just purchased could carry diseases that could spread quickly to your flock. Here are some things you can do to keep disease away from your birds:

- If visitors have birds of their own, do not let them near your birds.
- **Avoid visiting farms or other households with poultry,**
- If you've been near other birds or bird owners, such as at a feed store, pet store, or bird club meeting, **clean and disinfect your clothing, shoes,** cages, and equipment before going near your birds.
- Have your birds been to a fair or exhibition? If so, keep them **separate from the rest of your flock for at least 2 weeks after the event.** If you've bought new birds, they should be kept **separate for at least 30 days.**
- Buy birds from a reputable source so you know you are getting healthy animals.
- Do not share lawn and garden equipment, tools, or poultry supplies with your neighbors or other bird owners, but if you must, disinfect them before bringing them home.
- Consider fencing off the area where you keep your birds and make a barrier area if possible. Allow only people who take care of your birds to come into contact with them.
- Wild birds should not have contact with your flock because they may carry germs and diseases.

Properly dispose of dead birds. Bird deaths are a fact of life. But if one of your birds dies, call the county extension agent, State department of agriculture, or your veterinarian for guidance.