

Tips for Staying Healthy Around BACKYARD POULTRY

Backyard poultry, like chicken and ducks, can carry germs such as **Campylobacter**, **Salmonella**, and **bird flu**, like a **H5N1**, even if they look healthy and clean. These germs can easily spread to anything in the areas where the poultry live and roam.



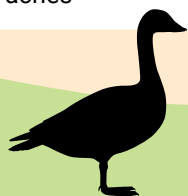
Touching backyard poultry or inhaling contaminated droplets produced by them can make you sick!

You can get sick from touching your backyard poultry, or anything in their environment, and then touching your mouth or food, or by inhaling droplets contaminated with virus. This can lead to swallowing germs, such as *Campylobacter*, *E.coli*, and *Salmonella*.

Symptoms of *Salmonella*, one of the more common germs found in poultry, usually start six hours to six days after swallowing the bacteria. Most people infected with *Salmonella* experience and often causes diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps. Illness can be severe and lead to hospitalization. Bird Flu, or H5N1, can cause eye redness, respiratory, and other mild flu-like symptoms in people.

CALL YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS AFTER EXPOSURE TO A SICK BIRD:

- Fever of 100.2°F or higher
- Diarrhea for more than three days that is not improving
- Bloody diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Dehydration
- Dizziness
- Severe abdominal pain
- Mild flu-like respiratory symptoms
- Eye redness
- Muscle or body aches



Wash your hands.

Wash your hands with soap and water after touching poultry, eggs, or their environment. Handwashing should last at least 20 seconds with soap and running water, focusing on all surfaces of the hands, including under fingernails. Consider having hand sanitizer at your coop as an additional measure when soap and water are unavailable.

Be mindful that poultry can cause illness.

- Avoid kissing or snuggling backyard poultry.
- Avoid eating or drinking in areas where poultry live or roam, as bacteria can easily contaminate food surfaces through airborne particles or direct contact.
- Keep your flock and supplies used to care for your flock, such as shoes and clothing, outside of the house. Regularly clean items.
- *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and *E. coli* are common germs carried by poultry that can contaminate poultry's feathers, droppings, or even the dust in their living areas.

Avoid having children younger than five touch chicks, ducklings, or other poultry.

Young children are more likely to get sick from germs like *Salmonella*.

In a 2021 backyard poultry outbreak, 3 out of 4 individuals who became ill were children under five. If contact occurs, the child's hands should be washed under adult supervision to ensure they are washed thoroughly. If poultry are kept in schools or childcare facilities, ensure they are in secure enclosures and inaccessible to young children.

Handle eggs safely.

Eggshells may become contaminated with *Salmonella* and other germs from poultry droppings (poop) or the area where they are laid.

- Collect eggs often. Throw away cracked eggs.
- Refrain from washing warm, fresh eggs. Eggshells are porous and water can damage the eggshell's natural coating that keeps air and bacteria out of the egg.
- Rub dirt off eggs with fine sandpaper, a brush, or a cloth. Wash hands after.
- Refrigerate eggs in a clean designated container to keep them fresh, prevent cross contamination, and slow the growth of germs.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. Cook egg dishes to an internal temperature of 160°F.

Avoid bites and scratches.

- Poultry bites and scratches can introduce bacteria like *Pasteurella* or cause local wound infections. Treat all injuries, even minor ones, promptly.
- Wear protective clothing, such as gloves and long sleeves, when handling poultry to reduce the risk of injury.



Learn more at www.cdc.gov/healthypets/pets/farm-animals/backyard-poultry.html.

BACKYARD POULTRY Planning and Care

Which animals are considered poultry?

Poultry includes any domesticated bird kept for producing eggs or meat, such as chickens, ducks, geese, guinea fowl, and turkeys.

KNOW THE SIGNS OF SICK POULTRY

Sick poultry can:

- Produce discolored or irregular eggs
- Be less active than usual
- Eat or drink less than normal
- Produce fewer eggs than usual
- Have discharge from eyes or nose, difficulty breathing, or runny diarrhea

CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN IF YOUR POULTRY BEHAVES ODDLY OR DEVELOPS UNUSUAL SYMPTOMS.

If poultry becomes sick or dies soon after purchase:

1. Inform the feed store or hatchery.
2. Contact your veterinarian to investigate the cause of death.

For additional information about animal health and diseases, please visit [U.S. Department of Agriculture Resources](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/news/sa_by_date/sa-2020/backyard-poultry-keeper-resources).

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• Prepare for your poultry.

- Check state and local laws. [UGA Cooperative Extension extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C969&title=Management%20Guide%20for%20the%20Backyard%20Flock](https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C969&title=Management%20Guide%20for%20the%20Backyard%20Flock)
- Ask your veterinarian about best food, care, and environment.
- Designate an area outside to clean and disinfect equipment.



• Purchase quality, healthy poultry.

- Purchase poultry from hatcheries that are part of the U.S Department of Agriculture National Poultry Improvement Plan (USDA-NPIP).
- When choosing poultry, look for smooth, sleek, and clean feathers. Poultry should be bright and active.

• Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

- Wear PPE when in contact with or around backyard poultry or other farm animals confirmed or possibly ill, or surfaces and other items that might be contaminated.
- PPE to use when handling sick poultry includes head/ hair cover, safety goggles, N95, coveralls, disposable gloves, boot covers.
- Learn more at [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/farm-workers.html). <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/prevention/farm-workers.html>

• Separate new poultry from existing flocks.

- To limit disease transmission, keep new poultry separated from existing poultry for at least 30 days before introducing them into an existing flock.
- Clean clothing, shoes and equipment while moving between groups of poultry during separation period.

• Clean poultry cages and enclosures properly.

- Use disposable gloves and a mask during cleaning to minimize exposure to harmful germs.
- Wipe equipment with a brush soaked in warm water and remove debris such as manure, broken egg material, droppings, and dirt.
- Regularly remove droppings and spilled feed to reduce the attraction of pests such as rodents and insects, which can spread additional diseases.
- Apply disinfectant diluted according to the label instructions.
- Leave the disinfectant on the surface for the time indicated on the label instructions.
- Rinse and allow the surface to dry.

