

HPAI Guidance for Veterinary Clinics

What are the signs of HPAI?

- Decreased water consumption
- Extreme depression
- Very quiet
- Difficulty breathing
- Decrease in feed or water intake
- Swelling or purple discoloration of head, eyelids, comb, wattle, and hocks
- Decrease in egg production
- Sudden unexplained death

What if a client calls with sick birds?

Veterinarians should develop a set of questions for their clients to determine the HPAI risk of the pet bird and then develop their own procedure according to the potential risk and what they are comfortable with.

- What species of avian?
- Does the client live inside or near one of the state's control areas?
- Does the bird live outside or inside?
 - If outside, is their environment controlled or are they free ranging?
 - How long does the bird spend time outside?
 - Is the time spent outside supervised?
- Client questions
 - Does the client live by a body of water or agricultural field?
 - Does the client feed wild birds or wild animals?
 - Does the client engage in sport hunting of wild birds?
 - Does the client work or volunteer with any avian species?
- Is the avian species a wild bird?
 - Veterinarians should not let wild waterfowl, gulls or other susceptible HPAI wild species into their facility.
- Are all birds sick or just one? What is the overall health of the flock?
 - If one bird is sick or dead and all the others appear healthy it may not be HPAI. However, if a flock is experiencing daily mortality or there are a number of dead birds it should be reported to the Minnesota Avian Influenza Hotline right away at 1-833-454-0156.

How should clinics handle routine avian appointments?

Consider curbside protocols like those used during COVID-19. Rather than allowing clients into your facility, have clients remain in their cars while birds are taken into and out of your facility by staff or conduct the medical appointment in the client's vehicle if able.

Conduct discussions about care via phone.

Avian patient physical contact should be limited to only what is necessary, and staff should always wear the appropriate PPE and wash their hands before and after handling birds.

What if clients have birds in one of the state's control areas?

Encourage your client to contact the Minnesota Board of Animal Health's hotline **1-833-454-0156** to find out if they reside inside one of the state's control areas. They will receive further guidance on what to do if they have sick birds or if they need to move their birds. Veterinarians can also call the hotline for support with questions on biosecurity, control areas or any other questions related to the state's HPAI response.

Considerations for clinic staff biosecurity

- Does the facility have a written biosecurity plan and procedures?
- Do employees and volunteers receive biosecurity training?
- Do employees and volunteers change into dedicated work clothing/outerwear onsite? Is work-provided clothing laundered onsite, or is it taken home with employees?
- What personal protective equipment (such as boots, gloves, coveralls, and masks) do you provide?
- Are staff allowed to keep poultry or pet birds at home? Do staff engage in sport hunting of wild birds?
- If the attending veterinarian is an offsite contractor, do they treat birds at other locations? What precautions do they take when visiting your facility?
- Are there protocols (such as showering, changing clothes, or avoiding bird contact for 72 hours) for people who visit captive wild bird facilities or poultry premises?

Guidance for clinic staff biosecurity

- Making an exam room at the clinic for avian appointments only
- Seeing avian appointments at the end of the day or after hours
- Limiting staff contact with avian species, especially those that have pet birds at home.
- Emergency surgeries only for avian species. Routine surgeries should wait until only necessary.
- Hospitalized avian species should be kept away from routine avian appointments
- All medical equipment and laundry used for avian appointments should be thrown away or disinfected appropriately.
- Make sure the disinfectant used at the clinic kills the HPAI virus.
- Cell phones and other personal property are not allowed to be used during avian appointments
- Proper PPE should be used including gowns, foot coverings, masks, gloves, and eye protection.
- Educate staff and clients about how HPAI is spread and how to reduce the spread of the disease.

Materials to share with your clients

- [HPAI Informational Flyer for Small Flock Owners](https://www.bah.state.mn.us/media/HPAI-Notice-Backyard-Final.pdf)
(<https://www.bah.state.mn.us/media/HPAI-Notice-Backyard-Final.pdf>)
- [General Biosecurity Steps for Livestock and Poultry Producers](https://www.bah.state.mn.us/media/general-biosecurity-steps.pdf)
(<https://www.bah.state.mn.us/media/general-biosecurity-steps.pdf>)

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