

Contact Information:

Mid-Michigan District Health Department
Brady Guilbault
(616) 788-3008
bguilbault@mmdhd.org

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Avian Flu Awareness and Guidance

Clinton, Gratiot, Montcalm County, MI – The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) is encouraging those who work with livestock, particularly poultry and dairy herds, to be aware of the symptoms associated with exposure to the novel avian influenza A (H5N1). Avian influenza A (H5N1) is a type of flu virus that naturally infects wild birds and can infect domestic poultry and other birds and animals. It was recently detected in dairy cattle in several states, including two herds in Michigan. Though there is a low risk for the disease to transmit to people, those working around infected cows should take precautions and monitor for symptoms.

Liz Braddock, MMDHD Health Officer, says, “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a series of public health recommendations considering the recent avian flu activity. Although the risk of transmission between animals and humans is low, those working around potentially sick animals may be at a higher risk and should use the proper personal protective equipment, as well as performing thorough hand washing after contact with any animals or animal products.”

Signs and symptoms of H5N1 infection in people may include:

- Fever (temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater) or feeling feverish or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Eye redness (conjunctivitis)
- Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Seizures

If you develop symptoms of H5N1, follow up with your healthcare provider, or contact one of the MMDHD Communicable Disease (CD) Nurses below if you have any questions:

Clinton County: (989) 227-3111

Gratiot County: (989) 875-1019

Montcalm County: (989) 831-3615

In addition, MMDHD reminds the public to avoid being near sick or dead animals, or surfaces contaminated with animal's feces, litter, raw milk, or other byproducts. As always, people should not prepare or eat uncooked or undercooked food, or related uncooked food products, such as unpasteurized (raw) milk or raw cheeses. Products that have not gone through the pasteurization process may be harmful to your health.

For more information regarding guidance, symptom information, and monitoring, visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/hpai/hpai-interim-recommendations.html>.

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