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For Immediate Release

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### **Back Yard Poultry Tests Positive for Avian Influenza**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is reporting a third case of Avian Influenza (bird flu) in a 7-month period within the nine-county health district. This case was identified in chickens in a backyard flock. According to Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), bird flu is a disease caused by certain influenza viruses that are commonly spread between birds, not people.

“People rarely get bird flu but can become infected by breathing in droplets in the air that contain the virus, or by touching infected bird mucous, saliva or feces and then touching their eyes, mouth or nose,” states Chloe Martin, Disease Surveillance Program Manager at SWNPHD. “When handling sick birds, protect your health by wearing gloves, masks, and eye coverings.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there have been 71 probable or confirmed human cases of Avian Influenza in the United States since 2024, with two deaths reported.

#### **Tips to Protect Yourself**

- **Don't touch sick or dead birds:** Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves, masks, and shoe covers if you need to work with any items that may have been contaminated with their body fluids, saliva or feces. Items that could be contaminated are water sources, litter, feces or any surface that could have been touched by a sick or dying bird.
- **Wash up:** Always wash your hands and change footwear before and after handling your birds.
- **Take off your shoes:** Leave any shoes worn while taking care of poultry outside.
- **Keep birds outside:** Do not let backyard poultry live inside the house, especially where food or drinks are kept.
- **Stay Outdoors:** Clean any equipment or tools outside, not inside your house, such as food dishes, water dishes, and cages.

“Precautions to keep your flock healthy closely mirror recommendations for other health issues,” states Myra Stoney, Health Director. “Prevention is one of those precautions.”

#### **Tips to Protect Your Flock:**

- **Monitor bird health:** Watch for illness in birds such as runny diarrhea, eating or drinking less, decrease in egg production, or unexpected deaths.

- **Restrict access:** Limit visitors to your coop and do not share equipment or supplies with other bird owners.
- **Separate new or returning birds:** Quarantine any new poultry for at least 30 days before adding them to your flock.
- **Keep wild birds away:** Avoid attracting wild ducks and geese by cleaning up spilled feed and keeping poultry away from ponds or other open water sources.
- **Notify your veterinarian:** If you have sick birds in your flock contact your veterinarian right away.

For more information about avian influenza and back yard poultry, visit Nebraska Department of Agriculture website <https://nda.nebraska.gov/animal/avian#poultry> or USDA's HPAI website (<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-detections/commercial-backyard-flocks>).

For more information on bird flu visit [cdc.gov/birdflu](http://cdc.gov/birdflu) or contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, You Tube, and Instagram or view the website at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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