



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WESTCHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT GIVES UPDATE ON BIRD FLU

(White Plains, NY) – Although the risk of avian flu remains low and no human cases of H5N1 have been identified in New York State, the Westchester County Health Department urges residents to take precautions. Avoid contact with wild birds and any birds that appear sick or have died. Refrain from touching surfaces or materials contaminated with saliva, mucus, or feces from wild or domestic birds. Additionally, do not consume raw milk or unpasteurized dairy products, including cheese, yogurt, and ice cream.

Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler said: “While there are no cases here in Westchester County, we must still be vigilant. Avian flu remains a concern, and taking preventive steps—such as avoiding contact with sick or dead birds and following proper hygiene practices—helps protect both public health and our local wildlife.”

If a dead bird is found on a property, it should be disposed of in accordance with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) guidance. Proper precautions include wearing disposable gloves, a mask, and eye protection. Avoid direct contact with the animal and its fluids; keep children and pets away, use a shovel, and wash hands and clothing immediately after with soap and hot water. Carcasses should be triple-bagged in garbage or contractor bags and placed in an outdoor trash can.

Amler said: “The virus can be airborne, and you don’t want it getting in your eyes, nose, or mouth. Always wash your hands and clothing with soap and water after disposing of a dead bird.”

Amler also advised residents to keep their pets away from sick or dead birds and not to directly touch any sick or dying animal.

In cases where multiple dead birds are observed in a single location, it is recommended to report the incident to the DEC. More information about wildlife health is available at the [NYSDEC Wildlife Health webpage](#).

Avian Influenza Resources:

Centers for Disease Control
New York State Department of Health
USDA
American Veterinary Medical Association

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