



# Biosecurity Tips:

## 6 WAYS TO PREVENT POULTRY DISEASE

**If you are a backyard or pet bird owner, you know your birds depend on you to keep them healthy. There are some basic practices you can follow to prevent poultry disease.**

### 1) Keep Your Distance.

Restrict access to your property and your birds. Consider fencing off the area where your birds are to form a barrier between “clean” and “dirty” areas. The clean area is the immediate area completely surrounding your birds. The dirty (or “buffer”) area is the immediate adjacent area—consider this area to be infected with germs, even if your birds appear healthy and disease free.

Allow only people who take care of your birds to come into contact with them. Your caretakers should not attend bird shows or other events where birds are present. If visitors to your property want to see your birds, be sure they wash up first and clean their shoes. Better yet, keep clean boots or shoe covers for visitors to wear. If your visitors have birds of their own, do not let them enter your bird area or have access to your birds.

Game birds and migratory waterfowl should not have contact with your flock because they can carry germs and diseases. If your birds are outdoors, try to keep them in a screened area.

### 2) Keep It Clean.

Since germs can be picked up on shoes and clothing, moved from one area to another, and can potentially make your birds sick, you need to protect your birds’ home by keeping it clean.

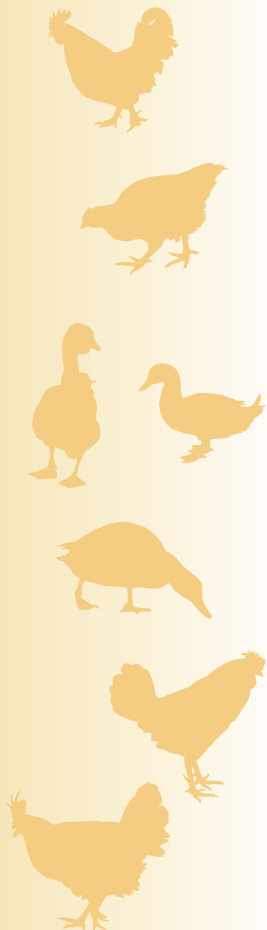
To keep your birds “germ-free,” have a pair of shoes and a set of clothes to wear only around your birds. Many people store these clean clothes in a covered pail at the entrance to their bird area. Or, clean and disinfect your shoes and launder your clothes before you check on or work with your birds.

Scrubbing your shoes with a long-handled scrub brush and disinfectant will remove droppings, mud, or debris. Wash your clothes with laundry detergent. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before entering your bird area.

Keep cages clean and change food and water daily. Clean and disinfect equipment that comes in contact with your birds or their droppings. That includes tools such as feed scoops, shovels, rakes, and brooms. All manure must be removed before disinfectant can work, so clean surfaces with soap and water first. Properly dispose of dead birds by burial or incineration or take them to a landfill. Check on local ordinances for acceptable disposal methods.

### 3) Don’t Haul Disease Home.

Car and truck tires, poultry cages, and equipment can all harbor “germs.” If you travel to a location where other birds are present, or even to the feed store, be sure to clean and disinfect these items before you return to your property.



**United States Department of Agriculture**

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Taking some of your birds to a fair or exhibition? Keep those birds separated from the rest of your flock and watch them for at least 2 weeks after the event to ensure that they didn't pick up a disease. New birds should be kept separate from your flock for at least 30 days before putting them with the rest of your birds. To prevent disease, it is best not to mix young and old birds or birds from different species or different sources.

#### **4) Don't Borrow Disease From Your Neighbor.**

Do not share birds, lawn and garden equipment, tools, or poultry supplies with your neighbors or other bird owners. If you do bring equipment, tools, or supplies home, clean and disinfect them before they reach your property. And remember to clean and disinfect borrowed items before returning them.

Never share items such as wooden pallets or cardboard egg cartons because they are porous and cannot be adequately cleaned and disinfected.

#### **5) Know the Warning Signs of Infectious Bird Diseases.**

Many bird diseases can be difficult to diagnose. The list below includes some of the things to look for that signal something might be wrong with your birds. Early detection of signs is very important to prevent the spread of disease.

- Sudden increase in bird deaths in your flock
- Sneezing, gasping for air, coughing, and nasal discharge
- Watery and green diarrhea
- Lack of energy and poor appetite
- Drop in egg production or soft- or thin-shelled, misshapen eggs
- Swelling around the eyes, neck, and head
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs, and legs (avian influenza)
- Tremors, drooping wings, circling, twisting of the head and neck, or lack of movement (exotic Newcastle disease)

#### **6) Report Sick Birds.**

Do not wait to report unusual signs of disease or unexpected deaths among your birds. Call your agricultural extension agent, local veterinarian, the State veterinarian, or U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Veterinary Services office.

USDA operates a toll-free hotline (**1-866-536-7593**) with veterinarians to help you. USDA wants to test sick birds to make sure they do not have a serious poultry disease. There is no charge for USDA veterinarians to work with you to conduct a disease investigation. Early reporting is important to protect the health of your birds.

**Call 1-866-536-7593 (toll-free) to report sick birds!**

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