



United States Department of Agriculture

Protect Your Poultry From **VIRULENT NEWCASTLE DISEASE**

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service



PROTECT YOUR POULTRY FROM VIRULENT NEWCASTLE DISEASE

Everyone who owns or works with poultry—whether you're part of a large commercial operation or raise birds as a hobby—needs to know about virulent Newcastle disease. This disease can quickly kill an entire flock and spread to neighboring farms. If an outbreak happens, animal health officials must act swiftly and have good cooperation from poultry owners to contain it.



**VIRULENT NEWCASTLE
DISEASE IS A FATAL
VIRAL DISEASE
THAT CAN AFFECT
ANY BIRD SPECIES.**



It's much easier to keep virulent Newcastle disease from affecting your flock than to deal with the consequences of getting this disease. Knowing and practicing key biosecurity steps—every day and every time you work with your poultry—is the best way to protect them.

What Is Virulent Newcastle Disease?

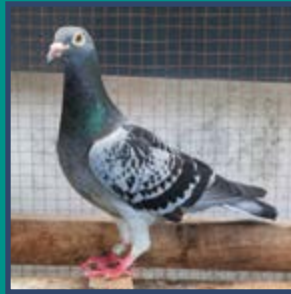
Virulent Newcastle disease¹ is a fatal viral disease that can affect any bird species. It spreads so quickly that many birds die without showing any signs of illness. It's one of the most contagious diseases in the world for poultry: it can infect and cause death even in vaccinated birds.

¹ Formerly referred to as exotic Newcastle disease

HOW DOES VIRULENT NEWCASTLE DISEASE SPREAD?

Virulent Newcastle disease spreads when healthy birds come in direct contact with bodily fluids from sick birds. The disease affects almost all birds and poultry, even vaccinated poultry. The virus can travel on manure, egg flats, crates, other farming materials or equipment, and people who have picked up the virus on their clothing, shoes, or hands.

The virus that causes virulent Newcastle disease can survive for weeks in a warm and humid environment and even longer in freezing temperatures. This includes on birds' feathers, manure, and other materials. However, severe dryness or sunlight destroys the virus quickly.





Fencing your bird area can help keep your flock safe from predators and from contact with other birds that could spread disease.

BIOSECURITY PREVENTS DISEASE

It takes just one contact with this unseen virus to sicken or kill your birds. In a single day, the virus can multiply and infect every bird on your premises.

Protect your birds with a few simple tips:



Keep Germs Away

Disinfect shoes, clothes, hands, egg trays or flats, crates, vehicles, and tires.

Wash hands and scrub boots before and after entering a poultry area. Wear disposable boot covers and coveralls if possible.

Isolate any birds returning from shows for 30 days to observe for signs of illness before placing them with the rest of your flock.



Have a Plan

If you own a commercial farm, you should have a site-specific biosecurity plan in place.

Make sure that anyone who enters the poultry area or has contact with your birds knows and follows your biosecurity rules.

For backyard bird owners and hobbyists, we encourage you to have a written biosecurity plan,

too. It's one of the best ways you can defend your birds from disease.



Limit Visitors

Restrict traffic onto and off of your property.

Prevent visitors from having contact with your flock, and avoid visits to other poultry farms or with bird owners.

If you or others must visit (such as service providers), make sure to wash hands and scrub boots before entering the bird area. Use and offer disposable boot covers and coveralls whenever you can.



Biosecurity signage on a farm



SMART PRACTICES WHEN BUYING BIRDS

Don't bring disease into your flock. To make sure you get healthy birds, follow these guidelines:

- Buy from a reputable hatchery or dealer.
- Request certification from suppliers that the birds were legally imported or come from U.S. stock and were healthy before shipment.
- Maintain records of all sales and shipments of flocks.
- Keep new birds separated from your other birds for at least 30 days.
- Keep birds of different ages or species and birds from different sources apart.

KNOW THE SIGNS OF VIRULENT NEWCASTLE DISEASE

If you see any of these signs in your birds, they could be sick. Get them checked out!

- Sudden death and increased death loss in flock
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Swelling around the eyes and neck
- Decreased activity, tremors, drooping wings, twisting of head and neck, circling, complete stiffness
- Greenish, watery diarrhea
- A drop in egg production or soft-shelled, misshapen eggs
- Sneezing, gasping for air, nasal discharge, coughing



Swelling of tissue around the eye and ruffled feathers



Mucous discharge from nose and mouth



Twisting of the head and neck



Complete paralysis



Darkening of the comb (cyanosis)



ALERT!

While an occasional unexplained bird death is normal, a large percentage of dead or dying birds in your flock is not normal. If there's no obvious cause (such as predators, weather issues, or other external factors), report the deaths to animal health officials immediately.

REPORT SICK BIRDS ASAP

If your birds are sick or dying, report it right away! Early detection and testing is crucial to prevent a large-scale outbreak of virulent Newcastle disease.

Contact your agricultural extension office/agent, local veterinarian, local animal health diagnostic laboratory, or the State veterinarian. Or, call USDA toll free at:

1-866-536-7593

We can test your birds free of charge to make sure they don't have this disease or another serious illness.

LEARN MORE

USDA has free resources online for anyone who owns or handles live poultry. This includes a series of checklists to help you practice good biosecurity consistently. Even if you're already familiar with biosecurity, it's always good to double-check your procedures.

Download the checklists and more at
www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/defendtheflock
(click on "Resource Center").

**And don't forget—report sick birds right away by calling
1-866-536-7593.**



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