



Avian Influenza (H5N1) Case Identification and Testing Tips for Physicians



If you suspect a patient may have H5N1 Avian Influenza (or influenza due to a novel strain), notify the Pinellas County Health Department immediately, through the 24-hour reporting line, (727) 824-6932.

What does a suspect case of Avian Influenza (H5N1) look like?

A patient who has an illness that:

1. requires hospitalization or is fatal; **AND**
2. has a temperature of $\geq 100.4^{\circ}$ F; **AND**
3. has a severe respiratory illness (such as pneumonia or ARDS); **AND**
4. has **at least one** of the following potential exposures within 10 days of symptom onset:
 - a. History of travel to a country with influenza H5N1 documented in poultry, wild birds, and/or humans, **AND** had at least one of the following potential exposures during travel:
 - i. direct contact with sick or dead domestic poultry;
 - ii. direct contact with surfaces contaminated with poultry feces;
 - iii. consumption of raw or incompletely cooked poultry or poultry products;
 - iv. direct contact with sick or dead wild birds suspected or confirmed to have influenza H5N1; or
 - v. close contact (approach within 3 feet) of a person who was hospitalized or died due to a severe unexplained respiratory illness;
 - b. Close contact (approach within approx. 3 feet) of an ill patient who was confirmed or suspected to have H5N1; or
 - c. Worked with live influenza H5N1 virus in a laboratory.

Who should be tested for Avian Influenza (H5N1)?

All suspect cases (meeting the above definition) should be tested. Testing may also be considered on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the Pinellas County Health Department, for:

- A patient with mild or atypical disease who has one of the exposures listed above (criteria a, b, or c); OR
 - A patient with severe or fatal respiratory disease whose epidemiological information is uncertain, unavailable, or otherwise suspicious but does not meet the criteria above (examples include: a traveler who has returned from an influenza H5N1-affected country whose exposures are unclear or suspicious, a person who had contact with sick or well-appearing poultry, etc.)
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What is the process for testing for Avian Influenza (H5N1)?

First, call the Pinellas County Health Department for consultation on the need for testing. If testing is determined to be necessary, health department staff will be available to assist you with testing, transporting specimens to the DOH lab in Tampa and obtaining the most recent guidance on dealing with suspect cases of Avian Influenza.

For testing:

- Oropharyngeal swab specimens and lower respiratory tract specimens (e.g., bronchoalveolar lavage or tracheal aspirates) are the preferred specimens, taken within 3 days of symptom onset.
- Swabs used for specimen collection should have a Dacron tip and an aluminum or plastic shaft. Specimens should be placed at 40°F (4°C) immediately after collection and shipped immediately to the Tampa Department of Health Laboratory.

Where can I find current information on Avian Influenza (H5N1)?

The internet is the most reliable source of current information on Avian Influenza. Here are some reliable and continuously updated sites for you to reference:

- For information about Avian Influenza, visit: <http://www.avianflu.gov>.
- For a listing of H5N1-affected countries, visit one of these sites:
 - The US Government's Avian Influenza website at <http://www.avianflu.gov>; or
 - The CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/outbreaks/current.htm>; or
 - The WHO website at http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/.

**To report a suspect case of Avian Influenza (H5N1)
or for other questions on this topic, call the
Pinellas County Health Department
at our 24-hour reporting number:**

(727) 824-6932