

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two Confirmed Cases of H5N1 Avian Flu in San Joaquin County

Stockton, CA (December 13, 2024) – San Joaquin County Public Health Services (SJCPHS), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have confirmed 2 human cases of H5N1 Avian (Bird) flu in San Joaquin County. These cases occurred in farm workers with known exposure to infected animals, and both individuals have had mild symptoms and are recovering. Currently there are 34 confirmed human cases in California.

People who handle birds, poultry, or cattle are at higher risk and should implement safety precautions, including wearing recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) when working in close contact with these animals. This would include respirators (N95 masks), eye protection (face shields or safety goggles), and gloves. CDPH also recommends that this group of workers receive a seasonal flu vaccine to help mitigate compound influenza exposure.

Currently, there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission of the H5N1 bird flu virus. SJCPHS is actively monitoring exposed farm workers for symptoms, providing flu vaccinations, and collaborating with county partners in distributing PPE and educational resources to farms.

The risk to the general public is low. SJCPHS is recommending that the public *not* consume raw milk or raw milk products, or raw eggs at this time. Cows infected with bird flu can shed the virus in their milk, but pasteurization makes dairy products safe to consume because pasteurizing milk neutralizes the H5N1 virus. This also applies to poultry - cooking eggs inactivates the virus. To learn more about raw milk and public safety visit [here](#).

Dr. Maggie Park, Public Health Officer for SJCPHS, states that, “We have an abundance of dairy farms in our county and want to ensure that these farm workers can do their important work as safely as possible by using PPE. We are also encouraging the public to avoid consuming raw milk or raw eggs and not to handle any dead birds. Our agency is working closely with numerous county and state partners to continue monitoring the status of H5N1 cases.”

People exposed to infected animals should monitor for the following symptoms for 10 days after their last exposure:

- eye redness (conjunctivitis)
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- muscle or body aches
- headaches
- fatigue
- difficulty with breathing
- fever

If one starts to feel sick, immediately isolate, notify SJCPHS, and work with public health and healthcare providers to get testing and treatment. Exposed workers can notify SJCPHS at (209) 468-3400, Monday through Friday, 8am-5pm. If outside of these hours, please call (209) 468-6000. You can also email sjcdiseasereporting@sjcphs.org.

To learn more about the H5N1 Avian flu, visit the California Department of Public Health [here](#).

To see the CDC’s current Avian flu response, visit [here](#).

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