

8 TIPS TO KEEP BIRDS HEALTHY



1 Don't let water and food become contaminated

5 Limit visitors to your birds

2 Avoid contact with wild birds

6 Quarantine new birds

3 Keep it clean

7 Know the signs of disease

4 Practice good hygiene at shows

8 Report sick or dead birds to **0800 80 99 66**



Many people keep poultry and other types of birds, and while the risk of an exotic disease such as avian influenza (bird flu) reaching New Zealand is low, all bird owners need to look out for signs of disease.



Disease is spread through animal-to-animal contact, droppings, respiratory secretions, contaminated feed and water containers, clothing, footwear, bedding, vehicles, equipment, meat and eggs. These simple, common sense steps will help you protect your birds against disease.

1. Don't let water and feed become contaminated

Your birds are at little risk if you keep their feed and water supply away from wild birds and animals. Store feed in a sealed container and always clean up spills. Ideally use town or bore water. If this source is not available treat water with chlorine.

2. Avoid contact with wild birds

Wild birds and pest animals can carry several diseases. Don't let your birds mix with wild birds. Use netting or fences to restrict wild birds, and remove objects that attract wild birds such as feed, water ponds and roosting places. And restrict your birds' access to open ponds, lakes and creeks.

3. Keep it clean

Regularly clean aviaries, cages and poultry yards, and disinfect equipment, feed and water containers. Don't share equipment with other bird keepers, and always thoroughly wash your hands, clothing and footwear with hot water and soap before and after handling birds.

4. Practice good hygiene at shows

If you go to bird shows, don't allow your birds to mix directly with other birds, and always wash hands thoroughly with soap and hot water before and after handling other birds. Avoid buying birds from markets or shows. On returning home, isolate show birds for 10 days before re-introducing to the flock.

5. Limit visitors to your birds

Infection can be carried on hands, clothing and footwear. If handling is necessary, make sure visitors wash their hands thoroughly with soap and hot water before and after handling your birds.

6. Quarantine new birds

To avoid introducing disease to your birds, clean, separate and monitor new birds, show birds or racing birds for 10 days before mixing them with your existing flock. Always buy birds from a reputable supplier. Make sure you know the health status of any birds you buy or move.

7. Know the signs of disease

Remain vigilant and inspect your birds regularly. If several of your birds become sick or die, report it immediately. Common signs to look for include:

- sudden and unexpected deaths
- rapid spread of disease throughout the flock
- depression and loss of appetite
- a drop in egg production
- nervous signs such as unusual head or neck posture, and convulsions
- swelling and blue combs or wattles
- coughing, sneezing and diarrhoea

8. Report sick or dead birds to 0800 80 99 66

It is important to involve your veterinarian if you ever have a health problem with any of your birds. If several of your birds display unusual disease symptoms, abnormal behaviour or unexpected deaths, report it immediately to the Emergency pest and disease hotline on 0800 80 99 66.

For more information visit www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests-diseases/animals/avian-influenza