



the FLAME®

Healthcare News and Tips

February 18, 2025

While not the most creative cook in the kitchen, I do, on occasion, very much enjoy making breakfast. Omelets, frittatas, French toast, quiche....lots of dishes that require eggs to make.

And so, as I arrived to the refrigerated aisle in my local grocery store, I was surprised to see that there was a limit on the amount of eggs I could purchase. Suddenly, the reality of the recent bird flu outbreak hit home. Hence the motivation for this topic.

Avian influenza, or bird flu, isn't just a concern for poultry farmers—it has real consequences for consumers.



How Avian (Bird) Flu Impacts You as a Consumer

The current avian or bird influenza (H5N1) outbreak began in January 2022, when highly pathogenic viruses were detected in U.S. wild aquatic birds, commercial poultry, and backyard flocks. Since then, the virus has spread across all 50 states, affecting over 138 million birds. While cases slowed during most of 2024, there has been a resurgence since November 2024, continuing into this year. As of February 2025, the outbreak remains ongoing, with significant impacts on poultry populations and related industries. While the direct risk of infection to humans is relatively low, bird flu outbreaks can have significant consequences on food prices, supply chains, and public health policies. Let's take a look at those issues.

While the risk of infection in humans is low, this recent outbreak has driven up the price of chicken, turkey, and eggs, disrupted food supply chains, and even affected restaurant menus and grocery store shelves. Additionally, misinformation and food safety concerns can cause confusion about what's safe to eat.

In this edition of *The Flame*, we break down how bird flu impacts your daily life, from rising grocery costs to potential shortages and public health measures. Stay informed and prepared—read on to learn more so you can make informed decisions in the face of bird flu's ripple effects.



Hang in there, spring is coming!!

Betty
Betty Long, RN,
MHA
President/CEO



Rising Costs of Poultry and Eggs

One of the most immediate effects of a bird flu outbreak is an increase in poultry and egg prices. When the virus spreads among commercial flocks, large numbers of birds must be culled to prevent further transmission. This leads to shortages in chicken, turkey, and egg supplies, driving up costs at the grocery store. [To date, it is estimated that 20 millions chickens have been killed.](#) Egg prices have surged significantly due to reduced supply, and poultry products have followed a similar trend. Like me, you may notice price spikes, limited availability, or even rationing in some stores.

Supply Chain Disruptions

[Beyond direct price increases, bird flu can cause broader supply chain issues.](#) When poultry farms are affected, processing plants and distribution networks also experience disruptions. This can lead to delays in getting products to stores and restaurants, affecting everything from frozen chicken to fresh eggs. Folks relying on poultry as a staple in their diet may need to explore alternative protein sources (tofu, pork, beef) during this period of high impact.

Food Safety Concerns

Consumers understandably have [concerns about food safety during bird flu outbreaks.](#) Properly cooked poultry and eggs remain safe to eat. Regulatory agencies and food safety organizations monitor the situation closely to ensure that infected products do not enter the food supply. However, misinformation can spread quickly, leading to unnecessary fears about consuming poultry products. Stay informed through reliable sources and follow standard food safety practices, such as cooking poultry to an internal temperature of 165°F (75°C) and avoiding raw or undercooked eggs.

Potential Impact on Other Food Products

Bird flu doesn't just affect poultry products—it can also influence other parts of the food industry. With higher poultry and egg prices, food manufacturers may adjust their recipes or substitute ingredients in processed foods. Restaurants may also alter their menus or increase prices to make up for rising costs. Additionally, shortages in poultry feed can impact other livestock sectors, leading to fluctuations in the price of beef, pork, and dairy products. Be aware that food prices may shift in multiple categories, not just poultry-related items.

Economic and Employment Effects

The poultry industry is a major economic driver, employing millions of workers in farming, processing, transportation, and retail. When bird flu outbreaks occur, job losses can follow as farms shut down and processing plants reduce operations. This economic impact can ripple through communities, especially in rural areas heavily dependent on poultry farming. Consumers may see increased unemployment rates in affected regions and potential shifts in market availability for poultry products due to these economic changes.



Another Year Begins!

Each January, for the last 10 years, the entire Guardian Nurses' team gathers for our annual Kickoff Conference. As our team has grown, the conference has grown from one day to three days. Invited speakers and guests present timely clinical, financial, and human interest topics which inspire and educate us so that we can provide greater support to our patients and clients.

We also do a fair share of team building, too, as evidenced by these photos. Thanks to all of our invited speakers and guests for sharing your expertise and your passion because as always, it fired us up!!

Health and Public Policy Measures

Though rare, avian flu strains can sometimes jump to humans, raising public health concerns. As reported on the CDC website, there have been 68 confirmed human cases of H5N1 bird flu in the United States. [In January, a patient in Louisiana died after becoming infected with bird flu.](#) Consumers may experience temporary restrictions on certain foods or changes in policies at grocery stores and restaurants. Staying informed about health advisories and vaccination recommendations (if available) can help you navigate these periods more effectively. However, as federal government websites like the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and NIH are impacted by the recent Trump administration directives, they may not provide the information you need.

How Consumers Can Prepare

While bird flu outbreaks are largely beyond individual control, consumers can take proactive steps to mitigate their personal impact. Here are some practical strategies:

- **Monitor Prices:** Keep an eye on poultry and egg costs and consider buying in bulk when prices are lower.
- **Explore Alternatives:** Incorporate plant-based proteins, fish, or other meats into your diet to reduce reliance on poultry.
- **Stay Informed:** As mentioned above, the federal health agencies' websites that have historically been helpful may not continue to be updated. Check sources such as your [state department of health](#) for updates on bird flu outbreaks.
- **Practice Good Food Safety:** Cook poultry and eggs thoroughly and maintain proper hygiene in food preparation to minimize health risks.

Final Thoughts

Bird flu may seem like a distant concern, but its effects are being felt in grocery aisles, restaurant menus, and even household budgets. While the risk to human health remains low, the economic and logistical consequences may be significant. Stay informed so that you can navigate these challenges with greater confidence and adaptability.

Lighting your way
through the
healthcare maze.®

Guardian Nurses Healthcare Advocates

215-836-0260 | Toll Free 888-836-0260

info@guardiannurses.com | GuardianNurses.com



Guardian Nurses Healthcare Advocates | PO Box 224 | Flourtown, PA 19031 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!