

Protecting Poultry Health and Preventing Disease: [A small flock keeper's guide to biosecurity](#)

If you keep poultry or other captive birds, the advice about preventing disease and reducing the risk of avian influenza (bird flu) in your flock can appear intimidating - but it shouldn't. Biosecurity doesn't have to be expensive, difficult or daunting. Every small step that you take to prevent disease in your flock will add up to improve your overall biosecurity, helping to keep your birds healthy.

Here's a great way to start:

1. Identify five (5) individual actions from the options below, which you can do all year 'round (or adapt to fit your set up) and put them in place now. You can write these on your "always" list.
2. Identify three (3) individual actions from the options below, which you can do in addition to the other five actions, should bird flu be confirmed in the UK. Write these on your "outbreak" list.
3. Review your steps regularly - see if you can add more to your "always" list and make sure you are able to do the things on your "outbreak" list.

Discourage wild birds:

- provide food and water in roofed or fully-enclosed areas that wild birds cannot access
- remove any spilled feed regularly

Keep your birds and equipment separate from wildlife and wild waterfowl:

- fence off any areas wild waterfowl gather (e.g. the banks around ponds and watercourses)
- store equipment, feed and bedding undercover and protect against rodents

Prevent contamination with good husbandry and hygiene:

- keep bird enclosures clean and tidy
- regularly disinfect any hard surfaces (using a Government approved disinfectant)
- keep single-purpose footwear for accessing your bird areas (e.g. the range and bird house) - always use them and clean and disinfect after visiting your birds
- minimise movement in and out of your bird enclosure – discourage visitors because the risk increases with each set of shoes or boots that enters the enclosure
- keep your chickens and turkeys separate from any ducks and geese - domestic waterfowl may carry avian influenza without showing any symptoms
- humanely control rats and mice - they can pick up and carry the virus

Stay informed and be prepared:

- sign up to the APHA free disease alert system – get text alerts or emails informing you of the latest news about notifiable disease outbreaks in Great Britain, including bird flu
- register your birds with APHA, so we can contact you quickly if there is a disease outbreak in your area, and you need to take action. Visit www.gov.uk/guidance/poultry-registration
- bookmark the Scottish Government website www.gov.scot/birdflu - it provides up to date information about avian influenza and biosecurity guidance for Scottish bird keepers.

Remember: If you or your vet suspect notifiable disease in your flock, you **must report it to your local Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) office. This is a legal requirement.**

My “always” list of disease prevention measures:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

My “outbreak” list of disease prevention measures:

1	
2	
3	

My local APHA office is:

Office	
Phone Number	

Dead, wild birds:

If you find in the same place at the same time:

- a single dead bird of prey, swan, goose or duck
- or five or more dead wild birds of any other species (including gulls)

you should report them on the report a dead wild birds page (www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds).

Alternatively, you can phone the helpline: 03459 33 55 77.

More info on bird flu is available at: www.gov.scot/birdflu
