



**Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services**

P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570 Phone: 573-751-6400 FAX: 573-751-6010  
RELAY MISSOURI for Hearing and Speech Impaired 1-800-735-2966 VOICE 1-800-735-2466

**Bret Fischer**  
Acting Director



**Eric R. Greitens**  
Governor

## **Avian Influenza A (H5N1) and (H7N9) Lab Fact Sheet**

To date, neither H5N1 nor H7N9 have been identified among humans in the United States. However, health officials and health care providers must be vigilant in identifying suspect cases. Basic guidelines regarding procedures for handling suspect cases follow.

### **BEFORE TESTING FOR AVIAN INFLUENZA**

Report suspect cases of H5N1 and H7N9 to the local public health agency or the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). At DHSS, contact the Healthcare Associated Infections Coordinator, 573-441-6235 during business hours or call 800/392-0272 (24/7). The Healthcare Associated Infections Coordinator should be contacted while testing for avian influenza is being considered.

After consultation with the Healthcare Associated Infections Coordinator and determination that testing is necessary, contact the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (MSPHL) at 573/751-3334 or 800/392-0272 prior to collecting lab specimens. See the [Avian Information Sheet](#) for instructions for collecting and submitting laboratory specimens.

Please refer to the CDC website regarding avian influenza for further information:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/professional/infect-control.htm>.

Influenza H5N1-specific and H7N9-specific RT-PCR testing conducted under Biosafety Level (BSL) 2 conditions is the preferred method for diagnosis. MSPHL is the recommended site for initial diagnosis and can perform influenza both H5N1 and H7N9 RT-PCR testing.

### **SUBMITTING SPECIMENS**

After consultation with the Healthcare Associated Infections Coordinator, specimens should be packaged in a mailer suitable for the transportation of infectious substances, these are available from the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (MSPHL). See [Avian Information Sheet](#) for complete instructions.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N1) is classified as a USDA [select agent](#). Any work with the virus (other than commercial rapid diagnostic tests or RT-PCR) must be under stringent Biosafety Level (BSL) 3+ laboratory conditions. Therefore, respiratory virus cultures should not be performed in most clinical laboratories, and such cultures should not be ordered for patients suspected of having H5N1 infection.

### **IF YOU SUSPECT AVIAN FLU**

If you suspect a human case of avian influenza and you have ordered testing with a commercial rapid influenza antigen test kit, results should be interpreted with caution. Clinicians should be aware that these tests have relatively low sensitivities. A negative result does not exclude a diagnosis of avian influenza. In addition, a positive result does not distinguish between seasonal and avian influenza A viruses.

Additional information is on the DHSS Pandemic Influenza website at <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pangen.php> or at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>.  
[www.health.mo.gov](http://www.health.mo.gov)

**Healthy Missourians for life.**

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services will be the leader in promoting, protecting and partnering for health.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER: Services provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.

*Document updated February 2017*