AAVAC General Practice H5 HPAI Triage & Response Flow

APPLIES TO AUSTRALIA ONLY — New Zealand practices should refer to MPI guidance (0800 80 99 66)

Quick-reference summary for practices without routine avian caseload or dedicated avian infrastructure.
For full clinical detail, see the AVA HPAI Preparedness Toolkit and DAFF's National H5 HPAI Guidelines for Veterinarians.

UNIVERSAL REPORTING RULE — APPLIES BEFORE ANY TRIAGE STEP, ANY BIRD

Any suspicion of H5 bird flu in any bird or animal — wild or owned, any species — must be reported.
No minimum number of animals: one suspect case is enough. Call the EAD Hotline 1800 675 888.
This applies alongside — not instead of — the triage steps below, which guide safe patient management.

Wildlife Clinical Signs:	Pet Birds and Backyard Poultry Clinical Signs:
• Sudden death • Lethargy, inappetence • Respiratory signs (e.g., nasal discharge, dyspnoea) • Neurological signs (e.g., tremors, ataxia, seizures) • Gastrointestinal signs (e.g., vomiting, diarrhoea) • Petechial haemorrhages	• Sudden death • Lethargy, inappetence • Respiratory signs (e.g., nasal discharge, dyspnoea) • Neurologic signs (e.g., tremors, ataxia, seizures) • Gastrointestinal signs (e.g., vomiting, diarrhoea) • Petechial haemorrhages • Reduced egg production • Swelling/cyanosis of head or legs

STEP 1 — Phone Triage

What type of bird? Owned companion bird / backyard poultry — or a wild / stray bird?

Wild or stray bird

STEP 2 — Ask About Exposure & Signs

Where was the bird found? Cross-check the LGA against known detections (birdflu.gov.au).
Clinical signs, and how many birds are affected?

Wildlife Bird Assessment

- Continue to triage and manage as usual — HPAI status alone is not a reason to delay care.
- Any suspicion, any bird — report as above (universal rule).
- Use full PPE for all suspected cases. (Practice hand hygiene, follow Don and Doff protocols).
- Isolate outdoors or in a dedicated isolation room/area, ideally with separate ventilation
- Designate staff for suspect cases, avoiding contact with other birds for 48 hours post-exposure.

Owned / backyard bird

STEP 2 — Ask About Exposure & Signs

Contact with wild birds, waterfowl, or unwell/deceased poultry?
Travel through an area with known HPAI activity?
Routine or mild illness, or severe/neurological signs — or sudden death of more than one bird in the flock?

No exposure, no concerning signs

OUTCOME A — LOW RISK

- Book as a normal appointment.
- Standard handling; waiting room permitted.
- No additional PPE required.
- Proceed with routine care.

Some exposure OR mild illness

OUTCOME B — MODERATE RISK

- Owner waits outside/in car; assess before bringing in.
- Minimum PPE: gloves, gown, mask (+ eye protection if respiratory signs).
- Use a reserved consult room or area with separate ventilation away from cats— avoid the general waiting room
- Timely disposal of contaminated PPE in a labelled, hazardous waste container

Genuine exposure history and still unsure?
Call EAD hotline 1800 675 888 to determine if reporting/testing is required.

Severe/neuro signs or flock mortality event

OUTCOME C — HIGH RISK (SUSPECT)

- Isolate immediately at the point of presentation.
- Any suspicion is enough — call EAD Hotline 1800 675 888 (24/7 availability) or go to birdflu.gov.au
- Do not transport elsewhere (incl. avian vets) without authorisation.
- Testing, treatment and movement are directed by the biosecurity agency.
- Euthanasia follows welfare need, not HPAI suspicion alone.

Awaiting biosecurity agency advice before any further action.

AFTER EVERY AVIAN CONSULT (ANY TIER)

Clean & disinfect surfaces with a product of proven efficacy against avian influenza, per label instructions.
Dispose of PPE/bedding as clinical waste if the patient was assessed as higher risk.
Briefly explain the precautions taken to the owner.
Full protocols: AVA HPAI Preparedness Toolkit · DAFF National H5 HPAI Guidelines for Veterinarians · Wildlife Health Australia vet advice

Developed by AAVAC as a quick-reference companion to national HPAI guidance.