

Deadly Bird Flu: New Risks of Human-Cat Transmission

Description

A recent study released on Thursday by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates a troubling possibility: humans may transmit avian influenza to their domestic cats, with potentially lethal outcomes.

This research, featuring two case studies from Michigan in May 2024, is documented in the agency's <u>Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report</u>. As concerns escalate regarding the virus's possible mutation into a strain that could incite a human pandemic, the findings are particularly alarming.

It has recently been revealed that cats can also become infected through pet food tainted with the virus, and that transmission may occur among larger feline species in shelters.

In both case studies, the pet owners were associated with dairy cattle farms affected by an avian flu outbreak, resulting in the tragic deaths of the infected cats. In the first instance, a five-year-old indoor female cat exhibited a rapid decline in appetite, hygiene, disorientation, lethargy, and severe neurological deterioration.

Despite urgent care at the Michigan State University Veterinary Medical Center, her condition deteriorated rapidly, leading to euthanasia just four days later. Postmortem examinations confirmed she had indeed contracted bird flu.

Two additional cats resided in the same household; one displayed mild symptoms, which were mistakenly attributed to allergies, leading the owners to disengage from public health inquiries. Among those living in the household, a farmworker opted out of testing, while an adult and two teenagers received negative results for avian influenza.

Humaniand cat huggingown
The CDC study indicates that humans may transmit bird flu to domestic cats. (
Uschi Du/Pixabay)

Connection to Unpasteurized Milk



Shortly after, a separate case involving a six-month-old male Maine Coon was reported to the university. The cat showcased symptoms such as anorexia, lethargy, facial swelling, and restricted mobility, ultimately succumbing within 24 hours.

This Maine Coon lived alongside another cat that remained unaffected. The owner regularly transported unpasteurized milk from various Michigan farms, including those confirmed to harbor infected dairy cattle.

Without protective gear, the owner reported frequent direct contact with raw milk and often neglected to change contaminated clothing before returning home. Notably, the sick cat exhibited a tendency to roll in the owner's soiled work attire, while the other cat did not.

Prior to the cat's illness, the owner experienced eye irritation but opted against testing for avian influenza.

Micrographs of bird flu viruses

Image not found or type unknown H5N1/bird flu virus particles. (CDC/NIAID)

The CDC researchers have recommended that farmworkers take precautions by removing contaminated clothing and rinsing off any animal byproduct residues, including milk and feces, prior to entering their homes.

Since the onset of the outbreak in 2024, the U.S. has reported 69 human cases of avian influenza, though the actual number may be underreported due to insufficient testing among farmworkers. So far, one person has died.



Experts caution that with the virus circulating extensively among mammals and birds, there exists a potential risk for it to combine with seasonal influenza, conceivably mutating into a strain that facilitates efficient human-to-human transmission.

Newly appointed U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has expressed intentions to shift governmental focus away from infectious disease research, raising doubts about the pathogenicity of germs. Historically, he has questioned the efficacy of vaccines, deemed crucial for controlling avian influenza should it escalate to a pandemic, and has advocated for the consumption of raw milk, a known vector for the virus.

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Vocabulary List:

- 1. Influenza /ˌɪn.flu'ɛn.zə/ (noun): An infectious viral disease that causes respiratory illness in humans and animals.
- 2. **Transmission** /trænz'mɪʃ.ən/ (noun): The act of transferring something from one location to another.
- 3. **Contaminated** /kənˈtæm.ɪ.neɪ.tɪd/ (adjective): Made impure by exposure to or addition of a harmful substance.
- 4. **Epidemic** / ep. I'dem. Ik/ (noun): A sudden increase in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected in a population.
- 5. **Pathogenicity** /,pæθοʊdʒəˈnɪsɪti/ (noun): The ability of an organism to cause disease.
- 6. **Mutation** /mju:'teɪ.ʃən/ (noun): The process by which the structure of a gene changes resulting in a variation of the organism.

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What troubling possibility is indicated by the recent CDC study?

Option: Humans may transmit avian influenza to domestic cats

Option: Cats can transmit avian influenza to humans

Option: Dogs are immune to avian influenza

Option: Avian influenza has no impact on mammals

2. In which month and year were the case studies from Michigan featured in the CDC report conducted?

Option: May 2024 Option: March 2023



Option: June 2025 Option: April 2022

3. How did the first cat in the case studies exhibit symptoms of avian influenza?

Option: Rapid decline in appetite, disorientation, lethargy, and severe neurological deterioration

Option: Aggression and increased appetite

Option: Hair loss and hyperactivity Option: Coughing and sneezing

4. What is recommended by CDC researchers for farmworkers to prevent the spread of avian influenza?

Option: Change all clothing before entering the house

Option: Wear gloves at all times

Option: Rinse off any animal byproduct residues before entering the house

Option: Avoid contact with any animals

5. How many human cases of avian influenza were reported in the U.S. since the outbreak in 2024? NEWS.COM

Option: 69 cases Option: 100 cases Option: 45 cases Option: 31 cases

6. What does U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. advocate for regarding raw milk consumption?

Option: Consuming raw milk is safe for all animals Option: Raw milk is a known vector for avian influenza Option: Raw milk has no impact on virus transmission Option: Raw milk should not be consumed by any animals

True-False

- 7. The first infected cat in the case studies survived after treatment.
- 8. Avian influenza can potentially mutate into a strain that enables efficient human-to-human transmission.
- 9. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is in favor of shifting focus from infectious disease research.
- 10. The sick cat in the second case study showed no interest in rolling in the owner's soiled work attire.
- 11. One person has died from avian influenza in the U.S. since the outbreak in 2024.



Gap-Fill

12. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has questioned the efficacy of vaccines.

13. The first case of avian influenza in cats was confirmed in the year	·
14. The Maine Coon cat succumbed to avian influenza within	hours of showcasing
symptoms.	
15. The CDC has recommended farmworkers to remove contaminated clothing and ring	se off residues before
entering their homes since the outbreak in	
16. U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has expressed intentions to shift focus	away from infectious
disease research, raising doubts about the pathogenicity of	
17. Experts caution that there exists a potential risk for avian influenza to combine wit	
, possibly mutating into a strain for efficient human-to-human	transmission.
18. The sick Maine Coon cat had direct contact with unpasteurized milk transported from	om infected dairy
cattle farms in	

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Humans may transmit avian influenza to domestic cats 2. May 2024 3. Rapid decline in appetite, disorientation, lethargy, and severe neurological deterioration 4. Rinse off any animal byproduct residues before entering the house 5. 69 cases 6. Raw milk is a known vector for avian influenza

True-False: 7. False 8. True 9. True 10. False 11. True 12. True

Gap-Fill: 13. 2024 14. 24 16. germs 17. seasonal influenza 18. Michigan

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)



1. What is the term used to describe a situation where pests overrun an area?

Option: Propagation Option: Infestation Option: Resilient Option: Daunting

2. Which term refers to the act of persisting in a task or belief despite obstacles?

Option: Impact

Option: Perseverance Option: Achievement Option: Transmission

3. What word means to make something clear or explain?

Option: Collision Option: Elucidated Option: Efficacy Option: Nominally

4. What term is used to describe the act of breeding multiplying or spreading? ESL-NEW

Option: Trajectory Option: Collaborative Option: Propagate Option: Thermal

5. Which term describes something mysterious puzzling or difficult to understand?

Option: Mutation Option: Enigmatic Option: Mitigating Option: Challenges

6. What is a viral infection that causes fever cough and muscle aches?

Option: Epidemic Option: Influenza Option: Habitation Option: Sustainable

7. What term is used to describe the effect or influence of one thing on another?

Option: Efficacy Option: Achievement Option: Impact

Option: Probability



	www.esl-news.com
8. What is the term for an Option: Daunting Option: Resilient Option: Collision Option: Contaminated	instance of two or more things hitting each other?
9. What term refers to a pe	ermanent alteration in the DNA sequence that makes up a gene?
Option: Mutating Option: Pathogenicity Option: Mutation Option: Resilient	
10. Which term denotes th	ne ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level?
Option: Sustainable Option: Mitigating Option: Asteroid Option: Tranmission	
Gap-Fill (Fill in the bla	nks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)
11. An	is a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a
particular time.	
12	is defined as something that has been accomplished through effort or skill.
13. Efforts to	the spread of the virus have been implemented through strict
quarantine measures.	
14. The	energy generated by the sun is harnessed through solar panels for
electricity.	
	irds found in this region indicate rich biodiversity and suitable
16. Plant	involves the process of growing new plants from seeds cuttings or other



plant parts.
17. The economic of the pandemic has been felt across various industries
worldwide.
18. Governments are implementing measures to reduce the environmental impact
of industrial activities.
19. Overcoming often leads to personal growth and development.
20. The task of addressing global climate change can seem due to its complexity
and scale.
Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)
21. Despite facing many challenges the community showed strength and adaptability proving themselves to be .
22. The likelihood of rain tomorrow is high; therefore the of outdoor events should be considered.
23. The project's success was a result of a effort from all team members who worked together seamlessly.
24. Although he was the supervisor he had little actual authority over the team.
25. The doctor explained the modes of of the contagious disease to educate the public.
26. The water supply was found to be with harmful bacteria leading to a health alert.
27. The rocket's was carefully calculated to ensure it reached the intended orbit.
28. Winning the championship was a great for the team after years of hard work and dedication.
29. The medicine was tested for its in treating the new strain of virus.
30. An is a small rocky body that orbits the sun often found in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.



Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Infestation 2. Perseverance 3. Elucidated 4. Propagate 5. Enigmatic 6. Influenza 7. Impact 8. Collision 9. Mutation 10. Sustainable

Gap-Fill: 11. Epidemic 12. Achievement 13. Contain 14. Thermal 15. Habitation 16. Propagation 17. Impact 18. Mitigating 19. Challenges 20. Daunting

Matching sentence: 1. Resilient 2. Probability 3. Collaborative 4. Nominally 5. Transmission 6. Contaminated 7. Trajectory 8. Achievement 9. Efficacy 10. Asteroid

CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL5

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