

Newcastle Disease

Background Information

Newcastle disease is a highly contagious disease of birds caused by an avian paramyxovirus. It is very rare in humans in the UK and generally only causes mild disease.

Organism

Newcastle Disease Virus (NDV) – an avian paramyxovirus type 1

Incidence and Transmission

Newcastle disease in humans is very rare in the UK.

Infected birds excrete the virus in their faeces, where it can survive for long periods of time. The disease is spread from birds to humans by direct contact with the virus, usually from faeces-contaminated feed, water, equipment, clothing or footwear.

The disease is not spread from person to person.

No known cases have occurred from eating infected poultry.

Occupations and processes where NDV may present a risk

Occupational exposure to NDV may occur in those who:

- are in contact with infected birds; or
- work with materials or products from infected birds, particularly faeces and faeces-contaminated items.

Occupations where there may be a risk of occupationally acquired Newcastle disease include:

- poultry farmers;
- pet store workers;
- bird keepers;
- zoo and bird park keepers;
- veterinary surgeons; and
- street cleaners and waste disposal workers.

Clinical Information

Newcastle disease tends to be a mild-self limiting disease. The main symptom is conjunctivitis, in some cases accompanied by flu-like illness.

Control

The following control measures reduce the risk of infection:

- Keep imported birds in isolation.
- Good occupational hygiene practices should be followed, especially washing with warm water and soap.
- A suitable disinfectant should be used.
- Suitable protective clothing should be worn on farms during outbreaks, including overalls, gloves, and respiratory protective equipment.
- Protective eyewear should be worn on farms during outbreaks.

Further Information

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Newcastle disease](#)