



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Michelle Morse, MD, MPH  
*Acting Health Commissioner*

### **2025 Veterinary Alert #3 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A H5 in Two NYC Cats Linked to Savage Cat Raw Poultry Diet**

- **Highly pathogenic avian influenza A H5 was detected in two cats from separate residences in New York City. Both cats died as a result of infection. A third cat is presumed to have been infected and survived but was not tested.**
- **The cat infections are linked to a raw poultry pet food produced by [Savage Cat Food](#) with the lot number 11152026.**
- **Direct cat owners to discard any poultry pet food produced by [Savage Cat Food](#) with the lot number 11152026. Advise pet owners to avoid feeding their cats raw food products or raw milk.**
- **Report any cats or other animals with illness consistent with influenza and exposure to HPAI A(H5N1) virus in birds, other animals, or contaminated food items to the [NYC Health Department](#).**

*Please share with your colleagues in Veterinary Medicine and your staff.*

March 14, 2025

Dear colleagues,

This alert provides an update on highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1) in New York City following the detection of H5 avian influenza virus in two cats and a suspected third cat.

Cat A became ill and was hospitalized with fever, anorexia and severe respiratory disease following consumption of raw chicken packets (**lot number 11152026**) from [Savage Cat Food](#), a raw pet food company. Testing for H5 was performed at the Cornell Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, and confirmatory H5N1 testing by the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) is pending. Cat A died as a result of the infection.

A second cat, cat B, was diagnosed with H5N1 and testing was confirmed by NVSL. Cat B developed fever, severe respiratory and hepatic disease, and died as a result of infection. Viral sequencing at NVSL suggests cat B was infected with an H5N1 strain related to virus recovered from Savage Cat Food (lot 11152026). This cat did not consume Savage Cat Food but was exposed to another sick cat, cat C. Cat C became ill with fever of unknown origin after consuming Savage Cat Food (lot number 11152026). Cat C survived and H5 testing was not performed.

This investigation, and the ability to link the cat infections with a food product was possible through a coordinated effort across local, state and federal agencies and academic partners. Additional testing by NVSL and an ongoing investigation by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) were crucial

components, along with routine surveillance and testing by animal health partners including the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, the NYS Department of Health (DOH), and local veterinarians who diligently identified and assisted with the identification of these cases.

The FDA has been monitoring reports of H5N1 in cats in other states including California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington that consumed H5N1 contaminated food products. H5N1 can be transmitted to cats when they eat products like raw pet food and treats, raw milk, and raw poultry made from infected poultry or cattle that have not undergone pasteurization or cooking to kill pathogens, including avian influenza viruses. Cats infected with H5N1 can develop severe illness that may include neurologic signs, respiratory signs or liver disease that can rapidly progress to death. There have been no human cases of H5N1 associated with exposure to infected cats to date.

### **Cat Infections**

Affected cats have presented with a spectrum of clinical manifestations, including respiratory problems, severe neurological disease, and death. In addition to consumption of infectious raw milk and raw dairy, cats may also become infected following exposure to infected birds or other animals. H5N1 has not been detected in over 900 cats with neurologic disease, which were tested for avian influenza following a negative rabies test, as part of enhanced surveillance by the NYS DOH.

### **Testing Options**

Influenza A H5 testing is available at the [Cornell Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory](#). Contact the NYC Health Department's Zoonotic and Vector-borne Disease Unit (ZVDU) for consultation and to arrange testing when indicated. Call 347-396-2600 (ask to speak with ZVDU) or email [ZVDU@health.nyc.gov](mailto:ZVDU@health.nyc.gov).

See [Veterinary Alert #1: Updates to Avian Influenza Including Cat Infections Linked to Raw Diets](#) for additional information about H5N1 infections in cats from raw milk and raw pet food, as well as **Guidance for Veterinarians** for managing animals known or suspected of avian influenza infection.

As always, we appreciate your continued collaboration with our efforts to monitor public health issues in New York City.

Sincerely,

Asha Abdool, MPH; Renee King, MPH; Kevin Lovingood, MPH; Ryan MacDonald, MPH; Marc Paladini MPH, Christina Ng, MPH; Sally Slavinski, DVM, MPH, DACVPM

Zoonotic and Vector-borne Disease  
Bureau of Communicable Disease  
[ZVDU@health.nyc.gov](mailto:ZVDU@health.nyc.gov)  
347-396-2600

Visit our webpage for information and resources for veterinarians: [Zoonotic and Vector-borne Diseases: Information for Providers](#)

If you do not receive these alerts via email and would like to be added to the distribution list, email [zivdu@health.nyc.gov](mailto:zivdu@health.nyc.gov)

**Report animal diseases to the NYC Health Department:**

- Online through a [secure web-based reporting platform](#)
- Call 347-396-2600
- Fax the [Animal Disease Case Report form](#) to 347-396-2753

**Report upon suspicion:** Anthrax, brucellosis, glanders, influenza (novel with pandemic potential), mpox, plague, Q fever, rabies, SARS, tularemia

**Report upon laboratory diagnosis:** Arboviral encephalitides, carbapenem-resistant organism (CRO), leptospirosis, psittacosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, salmonellosis, tuberculosis

**Report within 24 hours any outbreak or suspected outbreak of any disease, condition, or syndrome, of known or unknown etiology, which may pose a danger to public health.**