

## Prevent VND with Good Biosecurity

The best way to keep your birds healthy is through good sanitary management, vaccination and proper biosecurity practices. Steps include:

- Restricting traffic onto and off of your property;
- Cleaning and disinfecting items and equipment that come in contact with birds or their droppings, including shoes, clothes, hands, egg trays or flats, crates, tools, vehicles and tires;
- Washing hands and scrubbing boots before and after entering a poultry area;
- Avoiding visits to other poultry farms or bird owners. If you do, be sure to change clothes and clean your hands and shoes before entering your own bird area;
- Isolating new birds and any birds returning from shows for 30 days before placing them with the rest of the flock; and
- Following an annual vaccination schedule for Newcastle which can help prevent VND.

### Additional Resources

**Fact Card - Exotic Newcastle Disease**  
[bit.ly/FactCardEND](https://bit.ly/FactCardEND)

**Biosecurity for Birds: Exotic Newcastle Disease**  
[bit.ly/BiosecurityEND](https://bit.ly/BiosecurityEND)

**Fact Sheet - Virulent Newcastle Disease**  
[bit.ly/FactSheetVND](https://bit.ly/FactSheetVND)

**Brochure - Backyard Biosecurity Practices to Keep Your Birds Healthy**  
[bit.ly/BrochureBackyardBio](https://bit.ly/BrochureBackyardBio)

As part of NDA's overall mission to protect agriculture, we work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to keep Nebraska's livestock and poultry industry healthy.



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## Virulent Newcastle Disease (VND)



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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## What is VND?

Virulent Newcastle Disease (VND), also known as Exotic Newcastle Disease, is a deadly viral disease that affects all species of birds, domestic and wild. VND spreads quickly and can infect and kill poultry.

Chickens are the most susceptible poultry; ducks and geese are the least. Bird owners should be aware of the basics, how to help prevent the disease and what to do if an outbreak is suspected.

Virulent Newcastle Disease was discovered in 2018, in a backyard flock on the west coast. The last time it was seen in the United States was in 2003.

## Signs of VND

VND shows similar signs in poultry as other viral respiratory diseases, so a definitive diagnosis must be made in a laboratory. Signs of VND include:

- Sudden death and increased death loss in flock. (Birds can die before they show any symptoms);
- Sneezing, heavy breathing, wheezing, nasal discharge, coughing;
- Diarrhea;
- Listlessness, lack of appetite, tremors and spasms, drooping wings, twisting of head and neck. walking in circles, stiffness; and
- Swelling around the eyes and neck.

## Report Sick Birds ASAP

If your birds are sick or dying, report it right away! Contact your local veterinarian, the State Veterinarian at 800-831-0550 or call USDA toll free at 1-866-536-7593.

Early detection and testing of possible cases of Virulent Newcastle Disease is critical to preventing large-scale outbreaks.

## How Do Birds Get VND?

VND spreads when healthy birds come in direct contact with bodily fluids from sick birds. The disease affects almost all birds and can infect and cause death even in vaccinated poultry. The virus can travel on manure, egg flats, crates, other farming materials or equipment, and people who have picked up the virus on their clothing, shoes or hands.

The virus can remain active in infected chicken litter for approximately 2 months and up to 12 months in infected poultry carcasses. The disease is highly contagious among birds. It can be transmitted to people and other mammals that come in direct contact with sick birds. In people, the disease presents itself as a mild case of conjunctivitis.

## Eating Poultry and Poultry Products

VND does not present a food safety concern. Properly cooked poultry products, like eggs and meat, are safe to eat.

## Make a Disinfecting Footbath

The VND virus can be killed by disinfectants and direct sunlight, but there is no treatment or cure for birds once they become infected. Here's what you need to make an easy disinfecting footbath:

- A low plastic pan or bin, wide enough to fit an adult's foot and shallow enough to step into easily;
- A plastic doormat ("fake grass" mats work well);
- A disinfectant that kills germs; and
- Water.

- 1 Mix the disinfectant with water per label instructions.
- 2 Put the doormat in the plastic pan.
- 3 Add the disinfectant so the bottom of the mat is wet.
- 4 Ask visitors to walk through the footbath, wiping their feet on the mat. The mat scrubs their shoes and applies the disinfectant.
- 5 When the liquid starts to get dirty, empty it and put in new disinfectant.