

Protect Your Pet – Stay Informed with These FDA Recalls

Pet owners, be warned — this virus strain affects cats, has appeared in certain pet food brands, and has prompted recent recalls.

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Wild Coast Raw has recalled its frozen Boneless Free Range Chicken Formula after testing confirmed H5N1 bird flu contamination, posing serious risks to cats in Washington and Oregon
- H5N1 bird flu, primarily affecting birds, can infect cats through contaminated food. Symptoms include fever, breathing issues, seizures, and in some cases, death
- If you have purchased these recalled pet foods, stop feeding them immediately. Check the lot numbers and discard the products, if they're affected. Watch for symptoms in pets and seek veterinary care if needed
- The FDA is enforcing stricter food safety regulations, requiring pet food manufacturers to reassess risks of H5N1 contamination in raw or unpasteurized animal ingredients
- Stay informed about recalls, choose tested pet food, and follow hygiene practices to minimize risks. Awareness is key to preventing future pet food-related illnesses

Here's another reason why you should be careful about the pet food you buy — In early March 2025, a pet food company in Washington has recalled its products due to possible contamination of the bird flu virus.¹

This virus, which usually affects birds, has been linked to sickness and even death in cats that ate the contaminated food. And while there's no solid evidence that humans can get sick from handling the food, the situation did raise serious concerns about pet food safety.

Pet Food Recall Alert

Wild Coast Raw, a pet food company based in Olympia, Washington, recalls its 16- and 24-ounce containers of frozen Boneless Free Range Chicken Formula after it contained a strain of H5N1 bird flu virus. The company primarily distributed the product to retailers in Washington state and Oregon. According to a news article from Pet Food Industry:

*"The product was distributed to pet food retailers in Washington State and Oregon and is frozen in a small round white plastic container with a green label. The affected lots are identified by a sticker on the lid with a number of #22660, #22653, #22641, #22639, #22672 and #22664 with a Best Buy date of 12/25. The recall is widened to include any raw material sharing similar production dates and lot codes as #22660 and #22664."*²

Many pet owners don't think about viruses in their pet's food, but this case shows why it's important to pay attention. After testing the food samples, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) first discovered the bird flu virus in this recall.

After there were reports of domestic cats becoming sick, particularly in King and Snohomish Counties in Washington State, after eating the cat food, further testing confirmed that the same virus was in the food they had eaten. One cat underwent treatment, while veterinarians euthanized the other.

*"The Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) reported the presumptive positive results of both cats with HPAI on Monday, February 24. WSDA received confirmatory results from the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) Tuesday, February 25. Five cat deaths in Oregon from HPAI have been recorded, at least two involving the Wild Coast Raw pet food," Pet Food Industry reports.*³

What You Need to Know About Bird Flu and Your Pets

Bird flu, or H5N1, is a virus that primarily affects birds. However, it can sometimes infect other animals, including cats and farm animals. Most bird flu cases in cats have occurred in those exposed to farm animals — such as barn cats living on dairy farms, where they frequently come into close contact with possibly infected cows.

However, when cats eat food contaminated with the virus, they can become infected and very sick. In 2024, a "strictly indoor cat" contracted the virus after consuming a frozen turkey product.⁴

Bird flu often affects a cat's nervous system, causing them to behave oddly or lose coordination. Symptoms include fever, runny nose, tiredness, eye discharge, trouble breathing, and seizures. Some cats exposed to the virus have died, making this a serious risk for pet owners who feed their cats raw food.

Bird flu can spread when an animal comes into contact with an infected bird or its droppings. In this case, it likely got into the pet food through contaminated poultry used in its production. Raw pet food carries a higher risk, mainly if it does not go through stringent contamination processes.

If you have a cat, it's important to know the signs of bird flu so you can act quickly if your pet shows symptoms. If your cat seems unusually tired, has red or swollen eyes, or has trouble breathing, take it to a vet immediately. The sooner you get help, the better the chances of recovery. While there is no cure for bird flu, vets can provide supportive care to help sick pets fight off the infection.

How This Affects Pet Parents (and What You Should Do)

If you're a pet owner, this recall is a wake-up call to pay closer attention to what you're feeding your pets. If you have been feeding your pet Wild Coast Raw food, stop immediately. Check the lot numbers on the packaging to see if your product is affected. Even if your pet seems fine, it's best to discard the food and not take any chances. Bird flu can spread quickly, and some pets may not show symptoms immediately.

Beyond this specific recall, you should protect your pet from future risks. One of the best ways to do this is by keeping your cat indoors. Outdoor cats have a higher chance of coming into contact with infected birds, which could put them at risk. If your cat must go outside, limit its exposure to areas where birds gather, such as near bird feeders or farms.

Another important step is to practice good hygiene. Wash your hands after handling pet food, and clean any surfaces where the food was stored or prepared. If you need to dispose of recalled pet food, do so in a way that prevents other animals from getting into it. Sealing it in a plastic bag and putting it in the trash is a good option.

The Pet Food Industry and FDA Are Taking Action

This recall has put a spotlight on pet food safety. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is now requiring pet food manufacturers to comply with their Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Preventive Controls for Animal Food (PCAF) rule, to reanalyze their food safety plans to mitigate the spread of H5N1. This applies to manufacturers that use uncooked or unpasteurized cattle or poultry ingredients (milk, meat or eggs) in cat and dog food. Pet Food Industry explains:

"Under the PCAF rule, manufacturers are required to identify and evaluate known or reasonably foreseeable hazards in their food safety plans. The FDA has deemed H5N1 a foreseeable hazard for pet food manufacturers using certain raw or unprocessed animal ingredients. Reanalysis is necessary to incorporate the latest scientific findings and address the risk of H5N1 transmission through pet food."⁵

As a pet owner, you can also play a role in making pet food safer. If you ever notice something unusual about your pet's food, such as a strange smell or discoloration, report it to the company or the FDA. Companies rely on customer feedback to catch problems early, and your report could help prevent a major health issue.

This Is Essential for the Future of the Raw Pet Food Industry

These pet food recalls highlight more than a temporary issue — they signal the urgent need to take pet food safety seriously. With reports of bird flu outbreaks increasing, this case proves the virus can find its way into pet food. If manufacturers don't implement stronger precautions, more pets could get sick in the future.

You should stay informed about recalls and food safety alerts as a responsible pet owner. The best way to protect your pet is by being proactive. Monitor what your pet eats, watch for signs of illness, and choose foods that manufacturers have tested for safety, especially raw varieties.

Even though bird flu rarely affects pets, linking it to pet food is a significant concern. Making smart choices and following expert advice can help keep your furry friends safe and healthy.

Sources and References

¹ [AOL, March 7, 2025](#)

^{2,3} [Pet Food Industry, March 3, 2025](#)

⁴ [ABC News, February 11, 2025](#)

⁵ [Pet Food Industry, January 20, 2025](#)
