

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (211) in DH SEB CD/8/6/1 Pt.35

March 8, 2017

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**A Confirmed Imported Case of Human Infection with
Avian Influenza A(H7N9) Virus**

I would like to draw your attention to the fifth confirmed case of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus in Hong Kong this winter affecting a 76-year-old man.

The patient, with underlying illnesses, developed fever and coughs with sputum on March 3 and sought medical attention at a private clinic the next day. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Yan Chai Hospital on March 5 and was admitted on the same day for management. The patient has been transferred to Princess Margaret Hospital for isolation and further management. His clinical diagnosis is pneumonia and he is now in a critical condition. His nasopharyngeal aspirate specimen tested positive for influenza A(H7N9) virus last night.

Enquiries revealed that the patient travelled alone to Fuzhou, Fujian between February 11 and March 1 during which he visited a wet market there. The patient's close contact has remained asymptomatic so far and has been put under medical surveillance. Tracing of his other contacts is underway.

The number of reported human H7N9 cases has increased substantially since the end of last year, with more than 480 cases recorded since last October. The number of cases in this wave so far has been much higher than that in the same period last winter season. The situation demands particular attention. The activity of avian influenza is expected to remain at a high level in winter based on its seasonal pattern.

To prevent avian influenza and other respiratory illnesses, please kindly remind your students / staff to observe strict hand hygiene, avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes and **avoid visiting wet markets with live poultry or contacting poultry** especially when travelling to affected areas of avian influenza. Besides, they should wash hands frequently with liquid soap, especially before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing. In addition, the following measures are also advised:



- Avoid touching poultry/birds/animals or their droppings;
- Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water immediately in case of contact with poultry/birds/animals or their droppings;
- Build up good body resistance and have a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved through a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate rest, reducing stress and no smoking;
- Cook poultry and eggs thoroughly before eating;
- Maintain good environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded places with poor ventilation if feeling unwell; and
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, furniture, commonly shared items and floor at least daily by using appropriate disinfectant. For non-metallic surface, disinfect with 1 part of household bleach in 99 parts of water, wait until dry and then rinse with water. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.

Students / staff with recent history of contact with poultry or history of visiting wet markets with live poultry in affected areas of avian influenza should wear a mask and consult doctors promptly if they have respiratory symptoms, and inform the doctor of their exposure history. The affected students / staff should avoid returning to the school. You may wish to note that the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has issued '*Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases*' and '*Management of Avian Influenza in Schools*' for schools, which can be accessed at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_schools_kindergartens_kindergartens_cum_child_care-centres_child_care_centres.pdf and http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/management_ai_school_eng.pdf respectively.

If you notice any increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among your students or staff, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control. Further information on avian influenza is available at the CHP website (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/24244.html).

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health