

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (197) in DH SEB CD/8/6/1 Pt.28

January 24, 2015

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

A Confirmed Case of Human Infection with Avian Influenza A(H7N9) virus

I would like to draw your attention to the second imported human case of avian influenza A(H7N9) in Hong Kong this winter. The patient is a 79-year-old Chinese man.

The male patient, who enjoyed good past health, has presented with runny nose, sore throat and cough with sputum since January 19 and consulted a private doctor on the same day. He then attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital on January 22 and was found to have fever. His nasopharyngeal aspirate was tested positive for avian influenza A(H7N9) upon preliminary laboratory testing by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). He has been transferred to the Hospital Authority Infectious Disease Centre in Princess Margaret Hospital for further management and isolation and has been in stable condition all along.

Initial epidemiological investigations revealed that the patient had travelled to Zhangmutou, Dongguan, Guangdong, on January 5 on his own during which he had visited a wet market with live poultry stalls but with no direct contact with poultry. He returned to Hong Kong on January 19 via Lo Wu Control Point. Based on information available thus far, it is classified as an imported case. Tracing of the patient's close contacts is underway and investigations are ongoing.



To date, 506 cases have been confirmed globally since March 2013, including 489 cases in the Mainland and 17 cases exported to Hong Kong (12 cases), Taiwan (four cases) and Malaysia (one case). Based on the seasonal pattern, it is likely that the activity of avian influenza viruses might further

increase in winter and heightened vigilance is warranted. The Government has raised the influenza response level from “Alert” Response Level to “Serious” Response Level under the Framework of Government’s Preparedness Plan for Influenza Pandemic on December 27, 2014.

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 H7N9 virus affected areas. 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;
- Poultry and eggs should be thoroughly cooked 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 avian influenza affected areas, 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 CHP has issued ‘*Guidelines to school on prevention of Communicable Diseases*’ and ‘*Management Avian Flu in 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_are_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 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,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK CHUANG', is centered on the page.

(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health