

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (37) in DH SEB CD/8/6/1 Pt.30

February 23, 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 third imported human case of avian influenza A(H7N9) in Hong Kong this winter. The patient is a 61-year-old Chinese man.

The male patient, who has known underlying illness, presented with cough and shortness of breath on February 16 and consulted a private doctor on the same day. He then attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Queen Mary Hospital on February 20 and was admitted for management. His condition deteriorated and was subsequently transferred to the Intensive Care Unit. He is in critical condition. His respiratory specimens were tested positive for avian influenza A(H7N9) by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) on February 23.

Initial epidemiological investigations revealed that the patient had travelled to Zhangmutou, Dongguan, Guangdong, from February 6 to 8 and February 14 to 15 respectively. He had visited a wet market on February 14 where he bought two slaughtered chickens. He returned to Hong Kong on February 15 via Lo Wu Control Point. Based on information available thus far, it is classified as an imported case. Investigations and contact tracing are ongoing.

To date, 602 cases have been confirmed globally since March 2013, including 582 cases in the Mainland and 20 cases exported to Hong Kong (13 cases), Taiwan (four cases), Canada (two cases) and Malaysia (one case). Based on the seasonal pattern, it is likely that the activity of avian influenza viruses will remain high in the 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 below the text 'Yours faithfully,'.

(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health