

## **Health Advice on Prevention of Avian Influenza in School**

### **Avian influenza**

Avian influenza (H5N1) is a type of influenza A that mainly infects birds but occasionally affects humans. Avian influenza can be transmitted from birds to people, although transmission between humans, up to this moment, is very inefficient. The initial symptoms of avian flu are similar to those of other influenza viruses, including fever, generalised muscle pain, cough and sore throat. However, it is more likely to result in high fever, chest infection, respiratory failure, multi-organ failure, and death.

### **Prevention of avian influenza in school**

#### ***Students and staff:***

- Droppings of infected birds and poultry may carry the avian flu virus, so avoid touching live birds or poultry or their droppings.
- If you have been in contact with live birds or poultry, immediately wash your hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water.
- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing and wash hands with liquid soap and water afterwards.
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly with soap, and use hand dryer or disposable towel for drying hand.
- Build up good body resistance through a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate rest, avoid too much stress, and passive smoking.
- If any students or staff develop symptoms, they should :
  - consult their doctor promptly;
  - wear a surgical mask; and
  - take rest at home and refrain from going to school.

#### ***School management:***

- Ensure sink locations and toilets are provided with liquid soap, disposable towels or hand dryers.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, toys, and commonly shared items at least daily by using appropriate disinfectant (e.g. 1 part of 5.25% household bleach in 99 parts water for non-metallic or 70% alcohol for metallic surface). Leave for 30 minutes and then rinse with water.
- If places are contaminated by respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, use disposable towels to wipe them away. Then disinfect the surface and the neighbouring area with appropriate disinfectant (e.g. 1 part of 5.25% household bleach in 49 parts water for non-metallic or 70% alcohol for metallic surface), leave for 30 minutes, and then rinse with water.
- Ensure good ventilation
  - Keep air-conditioners well-maintained and wash the dust-filters frequently
  - Switch on any wall fan and exhaust fan to enhance air movement

- Windows of classroom should be opened from time to time for better ventilation, but make sure that window and louver are not located on the same wall
- Keep sick leave records of staff and students. When there is an increase in the number of absentees:
  - Contact the staff or parents/guardians of absentees to ascertain the reasons for their absence
  - Inform Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health when a number of absentees with similar symptoms are noted.

**For more information**

Please visit the website of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health at [www.chp.gov.hk](http://www.chp.gov.hk) or call the Department of Health's 24-hour Health Education Hotline at 2833 0111.

*Centre for Health Protection  
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