

Health Advice on Prevention of Avian Influenza in School

Avian influenza

There are various types of influenza viruses. Avian influenza is caused by those influenza viruses that mainly affect birds and poultry, such as chickens or ducks, e.g. H5N1, H9N2, H7N9. Clinical presentation of avian influenza in humans includes eye infection (conjunctivitis), flu-like symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches) or severe respiratory illness (e.g. chest infection). The more virulent forms (e.g. infection by H5N1 or H7N9 viruses) can result in respiratory failure, multi-organ failure and even death.

Prevention of avian influenza in school

Infected birds and poultry (live or dead) or their droppings may carry avian influenza virus. Students and staff should pay attention to the following issues to better prevent them from contracting avian influenza:

Students and staff:

- Avoid touching birds and poultry (live or dead) or their droppings.
- If you have been in contact with birds or poultry (live or dead), immediately wash your hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water.
- Cover nose and mouth with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin and wash hands with liquid soap and water afterwards.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly with liquid soap and water, use hand dryer or disposable towel for drying hands. Rub hands with 70 – 80% alcohol-based handrub if hands are not visibly soiled. Rub hands for at least 20 seconds.
- 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 respiratory symptoms, they should :
 - ◆ wear a surgical mask;
 - ◆ consult their doctor promptly and inform attending doctor if return from affected area;
 - ◆ 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.
- Provide 70 – 80% alcohol-based handrub in places where hand-washing facility is not available.
- Schools should refer to instructions on the container for proper usage and storage of alcohol-based handrub. According to advice of the Fire Services Department, each school should not keep more than a total of 20 litres of alcohol-based handrub (40 bottles of 500ml capacity, or 200 bottles of 100ml capacity, or combinations of the two sizes). More than this, the alcohol-based handrub will need to be stored in an approved Cat. 5 Dangerous Goods Store.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, toys, and commonly shared items at least daily by using appropriate disinfectant (e.g. 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite in 99 parts water for non-metallic or 70% alcohol for metallic surface). Leave for 15 - 30 minutes and then rinse with water and wipe dry.
- If places are contaminated by respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, use absorbent disposable towels to wipe them away. Then disinfect the surface and the neighbouring area with appropriate disinfectant (e.g. 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite in 49 parts water for non-metallic or 70% alcohol for metallic surface), leave for 15 - 30 minutes, and then rinse with water and wipe dry.
- 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 (CHP) of the Department of Health when a number of absentees with similar symptoms are noted.

For more information

Please visit the CHP website at www.chp.gov.hk or call The 24-hour Health Education Hotline of Department of Health at 2833 0111.

Centre for Health Protection

April 2013