

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (104) in DH SEB CD/8/6/1 Pt.27

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Dear Managers / Infection Control Officers,

**A Confirmed Case of Human Infection with Avian Influenza A(H7N9) virus and
Activation of Serious Response Level of Government's Preparedness Plan**

I would like to draw your attention to a confirmed case of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus in Hong Kong. The patient is a 36-year-old Indonesian maid. She lives with her employer's family in Hong Kong. The patient is now staying in intensive care unit. Her current condition is critical.

Preliminary epidemiological investigation revealed that the patient went to Shenzhen of Guangdong Province on 17 November. She bought a live chicken in a market and ate the chicken after cooking it with a friend in Shenzhen. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is investigating the source of her infection. According to available information, this is likely to be an imported infection. CHP is tracing the exposed close contacts of the patients and will provide them with chemoprophylaxis and put them under quarantine. So far, four of the close contacts had symptoms including cough, runny nose or sore throat but no fever and their specimens have all have been tested negative for avian influenza A(H7N9).

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.

Prior to this case, no human infections with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus were recorded in Hong Kong. According to the latest update from the National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China (28 November 2013), a total of 140 cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus have been reported.

To prevent avian influenza and other respiratory illnesses, please kindly remind your clients / 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. 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).

Clients / 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 clients / staff should avoid returning to institutions. You may wish to note that CHP has issued guidelines to residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities on prevention of communicable diseases which can be accessed at http://chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_residential_care_homes_for_the_elderly.pdf and http://chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guideline_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_rchd.pdf respectively.

If you notice any increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among clients or staff, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

More information on avian influenza is available at the CHP website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk>).

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK CHUANG)

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