Guidelines on Prevention of Avian Influenza for the General Public

The Department of Health advises the general public to take the following precautionary measures to minimise the risk of contracting and spreading Avian Influenza.

Disease information


Health Advice for the General Public

- Avoid touching poultry, birds, animals or their droppings
  - Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water immediately if you have been in contact with poultry, birds, animals or their droppings.
  - When buying and handling live chickens, do not blow at their bottoms.

- Maintain good personal hygiene
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
  - Keep hands clean at all times. Wash hands frequently, especially before touching your mouth, nose, or eyes; before handling food or eating; after going to toilet; touching public installations such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing.
  - Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel or hand dryer.
  - If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, hand hygiene with 70 to 80% alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative.
  - Cover your nose and mouth with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of the soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, and then wash hands thoroughly.
  - If you have respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask and seek medical advice promptly.

- Maintain good environmental hygiene
  - Maintain good indoor ventilation.
  - Home should be cleaned thoroughly at least once per week with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 99 parts of water) for non-metallic surfaces. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70% alcohol.
o Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places if you are feeling unwell. High-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks while in such places.

o U-trap should be prevented from drying up and drain outlets should be disinfected regularly about once a week.

o Repair immediately if there is defect in the U-trap or foul odour coming out from drain outlets. Qualified technicians can be hired for inspection and repair.

- Observe food hygiene
  o Five keys to food safety:
    ▪ Choose safe raw materials
    ▪ Keep hands and utensils clean
    ▪ Separate raw and cooked food
    ▪ Cook thoroughly
    ▪ Keep food at safe temperature
  o Wash eggs with detergent if soiled with faecal matter and cook and consume them immediately. Eggs should be cooked thoroughly until the white and yolk become firm. Do not eat raw eggs or dip cooked food into any sauce containing raw eggs.
  o Poultry should be cooked thoroughly. If there is pinkish juice running from the cooked poultry or the middle part of its bone is still red in colour, the poultry should be cooked again until fully cooked.

- Build up good body immunity and have a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved through balanced diet, regular exercise and adequate rest.
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption.

For more information

Please visit the Centre for Health Protection thematic website at


Centre for Health Protection

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