Dear HKU members,

A confirmed human case of avian influenza A (H7N9) in Hong Kong

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) reported a confirmed human case of avian influenza A (H7N9) in Hong Kong on 30 December 2016. Please adopt strict anti-personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

Locally, the first imported human case of avian influenza A (H7N9) in this winter was recently detected. The neighbouring Guangdong and Macau also reported their first human H7N9 cases in this winter. The activity of avian influenza is expected to increase in winter based on its seasonal pattern.

As advised by CHP, the public should avoid touching birds, poultry or their droppings and visiting poultry markets or farms during travel, particularly in the upcoming New Year holidays. If feeling unwell such as having fever or cough, wear a mask and seek medical advice at once. Travellers returning from affected areas should consult doctors promptly if symptoms develop and let them know their travel history.

Please take heed of advice below while handling poultry:

• When handling live chickens, do not touch them or their droppings. Do not blow at their bottoms. Wash eggs with detergent if soiled with faecal matter and cook and consume them immediately. Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling chickens and eggs;

• Eggs should be cooked well until the white and yolk become firm. Do not eat raw eggs or dip cooked food into any sauce with raw eggs. 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, the poultry should be cooked again until fully done;

• Wash hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, before handling food or eating, and after going to toilet, touching public installations or equipment such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing; and

• Wear a mask if fever or respiratory symptoms develop, going to a hospital or clinic, or while taking caring of patients with fever or respiratory symptoms.

You may visit the following webpages for more disease information and health advice:

1. Avian influenza
2. The weekly Avian Influenza Report
3. Global statistics and affected areas of avian influenza

Thank you for your attention.

Dr. M K Cheung
Director
University Health Service

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