

## **ADVISORY FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES FOR PREVENTION OF AVIAN FLU**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This advisory is intended to explain the roles and responsibilities needed to be practiced by employers and employees of poultry farming in an effort to assist the Ministry of Health in managing issues related to Avian Flu occurrence in the workplace.

### **2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYERS**

1. Instruct employees displaying symptoms of fever, cough or running nose to undergo medical examination immediately.
2. Report to the nearest Health Office or the Department of Veterinary Services if there is a suspect of Avian Flu among the employees.
3. Disseminate regularly Avian Flu related health information and materials to all employees.
4. Cooperate with the authorities from the Ministry of Health, Department of Veterinary Services or Department of Occupational Safety and Health if needed, in the investigation of employees suspected with Avian Flu.
5. Provide personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, apron, boots) to all employees as recommended by the Ministry of Health/WHO. All reusable PPE must be disinfect before and after usage.
6. Provide adequate facilities for employees to practice good personal hygiene.
7. Ensure that all changing rooms, toilets, canteens, and rest room are kept clean.
8. Ensure that employees do not bring back uniforms/protective cloth after work.
9. Review and update the work process related to health risk.
10. Comply with any directives related to Avian Flu issued by Ministry of Health, Department of Veterinary Services or Department of Occupational Safety and Health from time to time.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES**

1. Report immediately to employers of the presence of any symptoms of fever, cough or running nose.
2. Abide by the directives given by employers to undergo medical examination at the nearest clinic or hospital.
3. Practice strict personal hygiene at all times at the workplace.
4. Wash hands properly and regularly after handling animals.
5. Utilize and maintain all PPE provided by employers at all times at the workplace. All PPE and clothing used must be kept at workplace. **DO NOT BRING THEM HOME.**
6. Cooperate with the Health Department, Veterinary Services Department if there is a need for investigation of Avian Flu cases.
7. Abide with work procedures as established by the management related to control of Avian Flu.
8. Obtain information on Avian Flu provided by the employers at the workplace.
9. Render any form of cooperation as directed by employers in assisting to prevent the outbreak of Avian Flu at the workplace.

**Department of Public Health  
Ministry of Health, Malaysia  
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## **AVIAN INFLUENZA (BIRD FLU)**

### **WHAT IS AVIAN INFLUENZA?**

Avian Influenza or Bird Flu is a contagious disease of birds. Migratory waterfowl especially wild ducks are a natural reservoir of avian influenza viruses. Domestic poultry (chickens, ducks, turkeys) are susceptible to the infection. Avian influenza rarely affects human but the recent outbreak in Vietnam and Thailand and also the outbreak in Hong Kong in 1997 showed that close contact of live infected poultry was the source of human infection.

Avian influenza is caused by type A influenza virus which have many sub-types depending on the surface antigen, haemagglutinin (H) and neuraminidase (N). The symptom varies depending on the infected strain. The current avian influenza outbreak is caused by H5N1 strain. This strain is highly fatal with death rate up to 100% in domestic chicken.

### **HOW IS THE DISEASE TRANSMITTED?**

Infected birds shed the virus in saliva, nasal secretions, urine and faeces. The virus can live up to 30 days in the infected faeces. The disease can spread from infected birds to human through:

1. Direct contact with infected birds/chickens
2. Handling of manure of infected birds/chicken
3. Contaminated water ponds with infected bird/chicken faeces
4. Transfer of infected faeces on clothing and contaminated equipment

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **DO THE AVIAN INFLUENZA ALSO AFFECT HUMAN?**

In most cases, avian influenza do not normally infect other than birds and pigs. The first documented outbreak of human with an avian influenza virus occurred in Hong Kong in 1997.

The most recent outbreak occurred in January 2004 when H5N1 avian influenza virus was isolated in human cases in Vietnam and Thailand.

### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF AVIAN INFLUENZA WHEN INFECTED HUMAN?**

The symptoms are similar to the common cold; high grade fever, sore throat and dry cough. In severe fatal cases it can lead to severe respiratory distress secondary to pneumonia. In young and the old, the disease is much worse because of lowered immunity thus giving the virus a chance to replicate faster.

### **HOW CAN WE AVOID THE INFECTION**

Avoid contact with infected poultry and their faeces or dust/soil contaminated with faeces which can result in human infection.

### **WHO ARE AT RISK?**

Those working in poultry farms, those involved in culling of infected poultry and birds. Eggs from infected poultry can also be contaminated with the virus.

### **HOW CAN THOSE AT RISK BE PROTECTED?**

1. Practice 'good animal husbandry' such as wearing of mask, gloves, gown and boots.
2. Must wash their hands frequently.
3. Good hygiene practices during handling of raw poultry meat.

### **IS THE CURRENT FLU VACCINE EFFECTIVE FOR AVIAN INFLUENZA?**

It is not effective.

### **IS IT SAFE TO TRAVEL TO THE AFFECTED COUNTRIES?**

World Health Organization do not posed a restriction to travel to these affected countries, however it not advisable to visit their poultry, bird farms or animal 'wet market'

### **DO WE NEED TO AVOID EATING CHICKEN AND DUCK MEAT?**

No. Properly cooked meat is safe.

### **WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN MALAYSIA AND HOW ARE WE HANDLING THE SITUATION?**

As of now, there were no reported cases of avian influenza affecting the poultry farms or cases among human in Malaysia.

There is a close collaboration between the Ministry of Health and the Department of Veterinary Services to handle the situation in our country.

The Ministry of Health is conducting surveillance of 'influenza like illness' and 'atypical pneumonia' in hospitals and health centers. As of now there is no increase in the number of such cases. All the health departments were advised to report of any usual number of deaths in chicken in their localities.

The Veterinary Department is closely monitoring the activities at the poultry and bird farms. Malaysia has banned importation of live, frozen, eggs and by products of chicken from the affected countries.

**THE SURVEILLANCE SECTION  
DISEASE CONTROL DIVISION  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA**

**Menu Utama**