

18 April 2013

Dear Valued Clients

1. Latest update on situation in China

- a. As of 17 April 2013 1800 CET, a total of 82 confirmed H7N9 cases have been identified, including 17 deaths.
- b. Close contacts of the confirmed H7N9 patients are being closely monitored, and thus far, no abnormal symptoms suggestive of influenza were reported.
- c. As such, there is currently **NO** evidence of human-to-human transmission
- d. WHO and Chinese authorities are still conducting investigations as to the possible sources of infection and until the source is clearly identified, further cases of human infection are expected and travellers should continue to be highly vigilant and practise high standards of personal hygiene.

2. Treatment, protection and myths

a. High levels of personal hygiene should be maintained

Maintain good personal hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Consider having hand sanitisers and facial masks in the workplace for colleagues to constantly clean their hands and prevent transmission of diseases through respiratory droplets.



b. Get yourself vaccinated against influenza

The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised. With the travel season coming and erratic weather patterns, risks of transmission of respiratory illnesses increase. Thus, protection against other prevalent strains of influenza is even more important now.



c. Be highly vigilant

Once there are symptoms of influenza (i.e. fever, cough, shortness of breath), see a doctor immediately. Early treatment with anti-influenza drugs is highly effective in reducing the chances of severe complications.



d. Myths

- **Ban Lan Gen (板蓝根)**

The only effective treatment against influenza is anti-viral medications, for example Tamiflu. Traditional medications, for example ban lan gen (板蓝根), has so far no scientific evidence that it can treat influenza, so it should be at best be used as a supplement only.



- **Poultry is not safe to eat**

Influenza viruses are not transmitted through consumption of well-cooked food as they are killed by high temperatures (70 Degrees Celsius in all parts of food). Thus, it is safe to eat properly prepared and cooked meat, including from poultry and game birds.

Diseased animals and animals that have died of diseases should not be eaten.



3. Other FAQs

a. Does this influenza virus pose a pandemic threat?

Any animal influenza virus that develops the ability to infect people has a theoretical risk to cause a pandemic. This increases when the virus develops the capability for human-to-human transmission. Currently, H7N9 has not shown this ability, thus whether it could actually cause a pandemic is unknown. Other animal influenza viruses in the past that have been found to occasionally infect people did not develop into a pandemic.

b. Is it safe to travel to China?

Number of cases identified so far in China is considered low and World Health Organisation does not advise special screening at points of entry with regards to this event, nor does it recommend any travel restrictions.



c. Are Chinese products safe?

There is no evidence to link current cases with any Chinese products and World Health Organization advises against any restrictions to trade currently.

Stay healthy, stay safe. We will continue to provide more advice and updates in our next issue.

Should you require further information or clarification, please contact our Corporate Services Team or Account Managers for assistance.

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