

16 August 2013

Dear Valued Clients,

H7N9 update 6

1. Summary of past events

April 1st marks the day when the first cases of H7N9 (bird flu) were first discovered and announced by WHO. Since then, 135 cases were reported, mainly from central China, with 1 isolated “imported case” reported that occurred in Taiwan. 45 of these patients have died due to the infection.



The symptoms of H7N9 are similar to that of influenza, namely

- High fever
- Upper respiratory symptoms like cough

More importantly, H7N9 virus has an increased risk of progression to serious complications such as

- Severe pneumonia
- Acute respiratory distress syndrome
- Organ failure
- Death

2. What is the current situation?

With the culling of poultry and closure of poultry farms as preventive measures carried out in June and July, the number of H7N9 cases seems to have reduced.

However recently, a new case of H7N9 has been reported in Huizhou, Guangdong which is the 1st ever reported case in southern China, hence raising alarm bells that there is now a southern migration of the virus.

Currently, there is **NO** evidence of **regular, sustained** human-to-human transmission of H7N9 but there have been a few **sporadic** cases of **possible** human-to-human transmission, hence raising concern that H7N9 may soon acquire mutations required for easy human transmissibility.



3. Measures to protect yourself

To reiterate, healthcare professionals are still monitoring the situation closely for any signs of possible pandemic outbreak, but currently, there is still no need for any trade or travel restrictions.

Protect yourself with the following measures:

1. General and respiratory hygiene

- a. Emphasis on general cleanliness
- b. Wash your hands often
- c. Use hand sanitisers if soap is not available

2. Respiratory hygiene

- a. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when coughing or sneezing to reduce transmission of air droplets
- b. Avoid close contact, such as kissing, hugging or sharing utensils with people who are sick

3. Food hygiene

- a. Do not touch animals whether they are alive or dead
- b. Avoid live bird or poultry farms
- c. Eat meat and poultry that is fully cooked (not pink) and served hot.
- d. Eat hard-cooked eggs (not runny).
- e. Do not eat or drink dishes that include blood from any animal.
- f. Do not eat food from street vendors.

4. Maintain a high level of alertness

- a. Consult a doctor if you develop flu symptoms, especially with related travel history

5. VACCINATE yourself against seasonal influenza

- a. The importance of this cannot be overemphasised
- b. Although there is no vaccine to protect against H7N9 currently, you can still get yourself protected against the common circulating strains of influenza



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

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