

Avian Flu (H7N9) in China, Hong Kong, and Macau

Warning - Level 3, Avoid Nonessential Travel

Alert - Level 2, Practice Enhanced Precautions

Watch - Level 1, Practice Usual Precautions

What is the current situation?

Chinese health authorities have confirmed 120 new human cases of avian influenza A (H7N9) since September 2016, with 37 deaths. Most of these patients reported exposure to live poultry or poultry markets. Infections have been reported in the provinces of Jiangsu, Fujian, and Guangdong, as well as the Macau and Hong Kong Special Administrative Regions.

CDC advises people traveling to China to avoid contact with poultry (including poultry markets and farms), birds, and their droppings and to avoid eating undercooked poultry. *There are no recommendations against travel to China.*

What is avian influenza A (H7N9)?

Avian influenza A (H7N9) is an influenza (flu) virus found in birds that does not normally infect humans. However, in spring of 2013, China began reporting infections with the virus in people. Most of these infections have been associated with contact with infected poultry or contaminated environments (such as poultry markets) in China. In rare cases, it can be spread from person to person. Early symptoms are similar to those of seasonal flu and may include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches and fatigue, loss of appetite, and runny or stuffy nose. However, infection with this virus often causes severe respiratory illness and, in some cases, death (see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-virus.htm>).

What can travelers do to protect themselves?

There is no vaccine to prevent H7N9 flu. To protect yourself when visiting China, take the following steps:

- **Do not touch birds, pigs, or other animals.**
 - Don't touch animals, whether they are alive or dead.
 - Avoid live bird or poultry markets.
 - Avoid other markets or farms with animals (wet markets).

- **Eat food that is fully cooked.**
 - Eat meat and poultry that is fully cooked (not pink) and served hot.
 - Eat hard-cooked eggs (not runny).
 - Don't eat or drink dishes that include blood from any animal.
 - Don't eat food from street vendors.

- **Practice hygiene and cleanliness.**

- Wash your hands often.
 - If soap and water aren't available, clean your hands with hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
 - Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. If you need to touch your face, make sure your hands are clean.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
 - Try to avoid close contact, such as kissing, hugging, or sharing eating utensils or cups with people who are sick.
- **If you feel sick after visiting China:**
 - **Talk to your doctor or nurse if you feel seriously ill, especially if you have a fever, cough, or shortness of breath.**
 - Tell your health care provider about your travel to China.
 - For more information about medical care abroad, see [Getting Health Care Abroad](#)
 - **Avoid contact with other people while you are sick.**

Clinician information

Clinicians should consider the possibility of avian influenza A (H7N9) virus infection in people presenting with respiratory illness within 10 days of travel to China, particularly if the patient reports exposure to birds or poultry markets. Although most H7N9 cases in adults have resulted in severe respiratory illness, infection may cause mild illness in some. Illness also has been reported in children. Influenza diagnostic testing in patients with respiratory illness of unknown etiology may identify human cases of avian influenza A or new cases of variant influenza (such as human infections caused by influenza viruses from pigs) in the United States. Patients with H7N9 infection are expected to have a positive test result for influenza A virus via reverse-transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR testing) that will be unsubtypeable by most assays. Nonmolecular rapid test results may be variable. Clinicians who suspect avian influenza A (H7N9) should initiate infection control precautions (airborne, droplet, and contact), obtain [appropriate specimens](#) and notify their local or state health department promptly. State health departments should notify CDC of suspected cases within 24 hours.

Additional information

- [Avian Influenza A \(H7N9\) Virus \(CDC\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions on human infection with influenza A \(H7N9\) virus, China \(WHO\)](#).