



New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
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Avian Influenza H7N9

1. What is the H7N9 virus?

Influenza A H7 viruses are viruses that normally circulate among birds. The influenza A(H7N9) virus is one kind of H7 virus. Although other kinds of H7 viruses have rarely infected people, human infections with H7N9 have never been reported until this recent outbreak in China.

2. What are the symptoms and signs of H7N9?

Most of the identified cases of H7N9 have had flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In some cases, patients have developed severe disease including respiratory distress, organ failure, and death.

3. What is the source of H7N9?

Experts from China, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are investigating and working to learn as much as they can about this new virus.

4. How many cases have been identified so far?

New cases are being reported daily and the World Health Organization is posting them in their [Disease Outbreak News](http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/index.html). (link to <http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/index.html>)

5. How do people get infected with this H7N9 flu virus?

Most of the confirmed cases had contact with birds, but scientists are not yet sure what the mechanism of transmission is. The H7N9 virus has been found in several species of birds in China and experts are still investigating how H7N9 is being transmitted to people.

6. Is H7N9 different from the H1N1 pandemic and H5N1 bird flu viruses?

Yes, all three of these viruses are different from each other. H7N9 and the H5N1 bird flu are considered animal influenza viruses that sometimes infect people. H1N1 viruses can be divided into those that normally infect people and those that normally infect animals.

7. Is the virus contagious?

So far there is no evidence that this virus can easily spread from person to person, but scientists are still investigating this and whether it may develop this ability in the future.

8. Is there a vaccine for H7N9?

There is no vaccine for H7N9 at this time, but the CDC has begun developing one according to their protocol for whenever a new human virus emerges.

9. What can people do to keep from getting H7N9?

It is always a good idea to practice basic hygiene to help prevent becoming infected with or passing bacteria and viruses. These steps include washing hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when you are sick until your symptoms have resolved. WHO is not suggesting cancelling travel to China at this time.

10. Is it safe to eat poultry and meat?

Influenza viruses are not passed to people by consuming well cooked food. Always follow all guidelines for the safe preparation, cooking, and consumption of all meat and animal products.

11. Is there a treatment for H7N9?

Laboratory testing conducted in China has shown that the influenza A(H7N9) viruses are sensitive to the anti-influenza drugs known as neuraminidase inhibitors (oseltamivir and zanamivir). When these drugs are given early in the course of illness, they are effective against seasonal influenza virus and influenza A(H5N1) virus infection. However, at this time, there is no clinical experience with the use of these drugs for the treatment of H7N9 infection.

12. Is it safe to travel to China?

The number of cases of illness identified in China is low. WHO does not advise the application of any travel measures or restrictions with respect to visitors to China or people coming from China.

For more information about avian influenza H7N9, visit the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Service website at www.dhhs.nh.gov, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-virus.htm, or the World Health Organization (WHO) website at www.who.org/int.