Advice on Prevention of Avian Influenza for Travellers

Advice from Department of Health

The Department of Health advises travellers to take the following precautionary measures to minimize the risk of Avian Influenza:

A. Before Departure
   • Prepare adequate surgical masks and 70 - 80% alcohol-based handrub.
   • If feeling unwell with respiratory symptoms, such as having fever, sore throat, muscle pain or cough, put on a surgical mask and seek medical attention immediately, and postpone your trip until recovery.

B. While Travelling
   • Cooperate with port health authorities and comply with all necessary immigration procedures and health checks at destinations.
   • Observe personal hygiene
     ➢ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
     ➢ Keep hands clean at all times.
     ➢ Wash hands frequently, especially before touching your eyes, mouth or nose, after going to the toilet, before meals or handling food, and after touching public installations or equipment.
     ➢ Wash hands with liquid soap for at least 20 seconds, and then dry with a disposable towel or a hand dryer.
     ➢ If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 - 80% alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative.
     ➢ Have tissue paper handy and cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing.
     ➢ Do not spit or litter. Use a tissue paper to hold your spit and discard it into a lidded bin.
     ➢ Have surgical masks handy and put on one if you develop respiratory symptoms.
     ➢ Do not share towels or personal items.
   • Observe food hygiene
     ➢ Five keys to food safety:
        ✷ Choose safe raw materials.
        ✷ Keep hands and utensils clean.
        ✷ Separate raw and cooked food.
        ✷ Cook thoroughly.
Keep food at safe temperature.

- Use serving chopsticks and spoons at meal times. Do not share lunch boxes or drinks.
- Avoid touching birds, poultry or their droppings.
- Avoid visiting poultry markets and farms.
- Maintain healthy lifestyle practices throughout the trip; do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption.
- Watch out for changes in health condition during the trip. If you develop symptoms of an infection such as fever, respiratory or bowel symptoms during the trip, inform your tour leader/tour guide and consult a doctor promptly.

C. After Returning Home

- Travellers who develop respiratory symptoms up to 10 days after their return from affected areas should put on a surgical mask, seek medical attention and inform their doctor of their travel history.

Specific Travel Advice to HKU Members

HKU Task Force advises the HKU members to follow the above guidelines and observe the following measures to minimize the risk of Avian Influenza:

- Check the most updated information related to Avian Influenza in Hong Kong or own country.
- Details of any precautions which may be in force can be found at these websites:
  - The website of the country of destination.
- Prepare a travel medical kit containing a thermometer, masks, disinfectants such as alcohol swabs and medications as necessary. [Traveller’s Medical Pack](#) is available in University Health Service. This medical pack is indicated for adults only. It only serves as symptomatic relief in case you have minor viral infections or allergies during your trip.
- Obtain the travel health insurance, including hospitalization.
- Get plenty of sleep and have a well-balanced diet to build up good body resistance.
Reference