

CHP closely monitors human case of avian influenza A(H5N6) on Mainland

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 22) closely monitoring a human case of avian influenza A(H5N6) on the Mainland, and again urged the public to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

The case involves a 33-year-old female living in Bazhong City in Sichuan Province, who had visited a live poultry market before the onset of symptoms. She developed symptoms on October 20 and was admitted for treatment on October 22. She passed away on November 14.

From 2014 to date, 88 human cases of avian influenza A(H5N6) have been reported by Mainland health authorities.

"All novel influenza A infections, including H5N6, are notifiable infectious diseases in Hong Kong," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Travellers to the Mainland or other affected areas must avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms. They should be alert to the presence of backyard poultry when visiting relatives and friends. They should also avoid purchasing live or freshly slaughtered poultry, and avoid touching poultry/birds or their droppings. They should strictly observe personal and hand hygiene when visiting any place with live poultry.

Travellers returning from affected areas should consult a doctor promptly if symptoms develop, and inform the doctor of their travel history for prompt diagnosis and treatment of potential diseases. It is essential to tell the doctor if they have seen any live poultry during travel, which may imply possible exposure to contaminated environments. This will enable the doctor to assess the possibility of avian influenza and arrange necessary investigations and appropriate treatment in a timely manner.

While local surveillance, prevention and control measures are in place, the CHP will remain vigilant and work closely with the World Health Organization and relevant health authorities to monitor the latest developments.

The public should maintain strict personal, hand, food and environmental hygiene and take heed of the advice below when handling poultry:

- Avoid touching poultry, birds, animals or their droppings;
- When buying live chickens, do not touch them and their droppings. Do not blow at their bottoms. Wash eggs with detergent if soiled with faecal matter and cook and consume the eggs immediately. Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling chickens and eggs;
- Eggs should be cooked well until the white and yolk become firm. Do not

eat raw eggs or dip cooked food into any sauce with raw eggs. Poultry should be cooked thoroughly. If there is pinkish juice running from the cooked poultry or the middle part of its bone is still red, the poultry should be cooked again until fully done;

- Wash hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, before handling food or eating, and after going to the toilet, touching public installations or equipment such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing; and
- Wear a mask if fever or respiratory symptoms develop, when going to a hospital or clinic, or while taking care of patients with fever or respiratory symptoms.

The public may visit the CHP's pages for more information: the [avian influenza](#) page, the weekly [Avian Influenza Report](#), [global statistics and affected areas](#) of avian influenza, the [Facebook Page](#) and the [YouTube Channel](#).

[Update on cluster of Multi-drug Resistant Acinetobacter cases in Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients confirmed to be carriers of Multi-drug Resistant Acinetobacter (MDRA) in a surgical ward, the spokesperson for Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital gave the following update today (December 22):

In accordance with the prevailing guidelines, the hospital commenced contact tracing and confirmed one more patient, a 79-year-old male, as a carrier of MDRA. The patient has been discharged.

The following enhanced infection control measures have been implemented according to the established guidelines:

1. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of the ward concerned;
2. Application of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene for staff and patients; and
3. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures.

The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up. The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation of the ward concerned.

HKMA Quarterly Bulletin (December 2023 Issue)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today (December 22) published the December 2023 issue of its Quarterly Bulletin. This issue of Quarterly Bulletin carries a regular article on the developments in the banking sector.

The Quarterly Bulletin can be viewed on and downloaded from the [HKMA website](#).

Three approved outline zoning plans referred back for amendment

The Town Planning Board (the Board) announced today (December 22) that the Secretary for Development has referred three outline zoning plans (OZPs) to the Board for amendment to reflect the latest land use proposals, namely the approved Mong Kok OZP, the approved Pok Fu Lam OZP and the approved Mid-Levels East OZP.

Each OZP incorporating the respective amendment(s) will be exhibited for public inspection under the provisions of the Town Planning Ordinance.

The Mong Kok OZP and the Pok Fu Lam OZP were last approved by the Chief Executive in Council (CE in C) in May 2023, while the Mid-Levels East OZP was last approved by the CE in C in July 2010.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (December 22) released the latest grading of water quality for four gazetted beaches that are open all year round for swimming.

Three beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1) and one as Fair (Grade 2).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Clear Water Bay Second Beach Golden Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach

Grade 2 beach is:

Silverstrand Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, there was no change in the grading for these beaches.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a tropical cyclone or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666. Members of the public can also obtain the latest daily water quality forecast information for all beaches that are open for swimming through the Beach Water Quality Forecast mobile application (available for download from: www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQApp) or the dedicated beach water quality forecast page (www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQForecast) on the EPD's beach thematic website.