

# 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 (May 27) 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 52-year-old female living in Quanzhou city in Fujian Province, who had exposure to backyard poultry before the onset of symptoms. She developed symptoms on April 13 and was admitted to a hospital for treatment on April 20. She passed away on April 30.

From 2014 to date, 90 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](#).

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## **Planning Department completes latest round of review of vacant school premises sites in accordance with Central Clearing House mechanism**

The Planning Department (PlanD) today (May 27) announced that the department has completed the latest round of review which has examined the long-term use of a total of four to-be-vacant school premises sites in accordance with the Central Clearing House (CCH) mechanism. The report, incorporated with the latest review results, is now available on the PlanD's website ([www.pland.gov.hk/pland\\_en/resources/vsp/index.html](http://www.pland.gov.hk/pland_en/resources/vsp/index.html)) and at the PlanD's Planning Enquiry Counters located at the North Point Government Offices and the Sha Tin Government Offices for public viewing.

The four sites, including one re-examined site, are located in Eastern, Southern, Wan Chai and Tai Po Districts. Three of these sites are recommended to be retained for government, institution or community (G/IC) uses, and the remaining one is recommended for residential use in the long term.

Since the establishment of the CCH mechanism in 2011, the PlanD has reviewed a total of 259 vacant or to-be-vacant school premises sites, including the above-mentioned four sites. In respect of the recommended long-term uses, 41 sites have been recommended for public or private residential use, and 193 sites have been recommended to be retained for G/IC uses. The remaining 25 sites, which are former village schools located within village

areas in the New Territories, have been recommended to be retained as village type development, rural use, open space, etc, in the long term.

In accordance with the status of site utilisation (as at December 2023), the majority of these sites (157 sites) have already been or will be put to the recommended long-term uses such as public and private housing and various G/IC uses. The other 52 sites are available for applications by non-government organisations (NGOs) for short-term beneficial community uses (relevant organisations may refer to the "GeoInfo Map" website ([www.map.gov.hk/gm/map/search/faci/\\_\\_\\_VGS?lg=en](http://www.map.gov.hk/gm/map/search/faci/___VGS?lg=en))). There is only one site the availability of which for short-term uses is subject to further confirmation. For the remaining 49 sites, they are wholly or mostly on private land and their utilisation depends on private land owners' initiatives having regard to the applicable uses in statutory planning terms and lease conditions. Members of the public can contact the relevant managing parties for the latest information on these sites.

In accordance with the CCH mechanism, upon the Education Bureau confirming sites of vacant or to-be-vacant school premises are no longer required for school uses, the PlanD would periodically review and recommend suitable long-term uses for these sites for follow-up actions by relevant bureaux/departments. Before implementation of the long-term use for individual vacant school premises sites, the sites concerned could be made available for applications by NGOs for short-term community, institutional or non-profit making uses.

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## **[CSB leads delegation to launch recruitment talks at universities in Guangdong and Fujian today \(with photos\)](#)**

To encourage more Hong Kong students studying in Mainland universities to join the civil service of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) led a delegation for the first time, together with representatives from the Civil Aviation Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department, Highways Department and Leisure and Cultural Services Department, to visit the campuses of Shenzhen University, Jinan University and Huaqiao University in Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Xiamen, and Quanzhou respectively, to conduct recruitment talks for three consecutive days starting today (May 27).

The Director of General Grades of the CSB, Mr Hermes Chan, told the Hong Kong students present at the recruitment talk at Shenzhen University that

different departments and grades of the HKSAR Government recruit a large number of people every year to provide young persons with job opportunities of different types and nature, as well as offer long-term and stable career development. These jobs are suitable for people who are determined to contribute to the country, serve Hong Kong and accept challenges. The CSB conducted recruitment talks at universities in Guangdong and Fujian last year, and many Hong Kong students expressed interest in the civil service posts. This is the first time for the CSB and other departments to have formed a delegation to visit universities in Guangdong and Fujian to introduce the diverse career opportunities provided by the HKSAR Government. He encouraged Hong Kong students with aspirations to serve the community to equip themselves early to join the civil service.

The recruitment talk introduced the work, entry requirements, recruitment processes and related information for positions including Executive Officer, Clerical and Secretarial Grades, Student Air Traffic Control Officer, Civil Engineering, Geotechnical Engineering and Engineering Geology Graduates, Technical Officers, Works Supervisors, Leisure Services Managers, Amenities Assistants and civil service/contract Lifeguards. There was also a mock interview session for the first time, enabling students to acquire first-hand experience of the interview process, receive on-the-spot assessment and advice, and enrich their interview experience and skills.

The delegation will visit Jinan University and Huaqiao University tomorrow (May 28) and the next day (May 29) respectively to conduct recruitment talks.

For information on matters related to civil service recruitment and job vacancies, as well as the latest examination arrangements, please visit the website of the CSB: <https://www.csb.gov.hk/english/recruit/7.html>.







## Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 27) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From May 19 to 25, the CHP recorded two community-acquired LD cases:

1. A male patient, aged 70 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Kwun Tong District; and
2. A male patient, aged 61 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Tuen Mun District.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of May 25, 35 LD cases had been recorded this year. In 2023 and 2022, there were 121 and 80 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus that support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

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â€‹The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh-water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not

encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;

- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2  $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
  2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
  4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
  5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

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## [Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan](#)

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these

products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on May 24 to noon today (May 27), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 316 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category, in the past three days (including last Saturday and Sunday). No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" ([www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme\\_rafs/programme\\_rafs\\_fc\\_01\\_30\\_Nuclear\\_Event\\_and\\_Food\\_Safety.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html)).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 150 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website ([www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological\\_testing/Radiological\\_Test.html](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html)).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website ([www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html](http://www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html)).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 54 231 samples of food imported from Japan (including 35 086 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 13 738 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.