



# Travel Guard® Health Advisory

## Avian (Bird) Influenza A (H7N9) Virus

AIG Travel has been closely monitoring an outbreak of influenza A (H7N9) bird flu infection in China. More than 100 human cases have been reported since January 2017. As of 13 February 2017, authorities have closed live poultry markets in the eastern Zhejiang province and warned that approximately 30 percent of poultry markets in China's third-largest city of Guangzhou have been infected with the H7N9 bird flu virus. Earlier in January 2017, a human case was reported by Hong Kong's Department of Health. The patient was in Guangzhou in December 2016 and had developed flu-like symptoms and was admitted to a local hospital on 2 January 2017. He was later transferred back to Hong Kong for further treatment, but his condition deteriorated, and he passed away six days later.<sup>1</sup>

In 2013, there were more than 250 confirmed cases of H7N9 bird flu with more than 50 deaths reported. Several strains of avian flu have also been spreading in Europe and Asia this winter, but the most concerning, at present, is the H7N9 strain that has circulated in China every winter since 2013.

### What is Influenza A (H7N9) Virus?

First reported in March 2013, Influenza A (H7N9) is an illness caused by an influenza virus that normally circulates among birds. It is a subgroup among the larger group of H7 viruses. Chinese authorities are conducting animal and human health investigations to learn more about this outbreak. Available evidence suggests that most people have been infected with the virus after having contact with infected poultry or contaminated environments.

### Signs and Symptoms

The main signs and symptoms of infection with the virus include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Occasionally, severe pneumonia has been present in those infected with the influenza A (H7N9) virus. Therefore, it is important to seek early medical attention and a proper diagnosis, so appropriate medical care may be provided.

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Vomiting and diarrhea (this is more common in children than adults)

### Medical Management and Treatment of Influenza A (H7N9) Virus

It is recommended that travellers who notice symptoms of the infection contact a local medical provider as soon as possible. No vaccine is available to prevent influenza A (H7N9) virus, but AIG Travel's medical team is actively following ongoing research.



### Tips for the Prevention of Influenza

Travellers with flu-like symptoms are advised to seek early medical attention and stay home at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever.

We also recommend that you:

- Avoid contact with people who are sick or may have been exposed to the flu.
- Limit contact with others while sick.
- Avoid large crowds if there is a flu outbreak.
- Wash your hands before, during and after you prepare food, as well as before you eat.
- Refrain from touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid stress and get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of fresh water and eat as healthy as possible.
- Try to take immune-boosting supplements and vitamins, if approved by your health care provider.
- Prepare for trips by consulting the local health map to avoid areas of outbreak.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw away used tissues immediately.
- Avoid live bird and poultry markets, as well direct contact with sick or infected poultry.

### References

- [World Health Organization, WHO](http://www.who.int/csr/don/17-january-2017-ah7n9-china/en/)  
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.who.int/csr/don/17-january-2017-ah7n9-china/en/>

### About AIG Travel and Travel Guard®

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