

# H7N9 (Avian Influenza A Virus)

## fact sheet



A new bird flu virus, called H7N9 for short, is causing serious illness in people in China. About 20 percent of the people who have been infected have died. Luckily, H7N9 is not spreading easily between people the way season influenza (flu) viruses do. Evidence indicates that most people are being infected after exposure to birds or environments that might be contaminated with H7N9 (like live bird markets, for example).

An H7N9 outbreak in humans was first reported in China by the World Health Organization on April 1, 2013\*. The virus has also been found in poultry in China. During the outbreak, more than 130 human infections with H7N9 were reported. Many of the people infected with H7N9 reported contact with poultry.

No cases of H7N9 in humans or birds have been found in the United States. At this time, the risk to people in the United States is considered to be low.

### *Symptoms and Care*

Most people infected with H7N9 develop severe acute respiratory illness. Symptoms include: fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Currently there is no vaccine to protect against H7N9; however, the CDC and others are working to develop a vaccine.

There is no specific medication to treat H7N9, although antiviral drugs like Tamiflu® and Relenza® used to treat seasonal flu are recommended.

### *Transmission*

At this time, there is no evidence of sustained person-to-person spread. Available evidence indicates that most people were infected after being exposed to birds or to environments potentially contaminated with bird flu virus (like live bird markets, for example). Droppings and mucus from infected birds can contain the virus, and it is spread when a person comes in contact with the virus and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. There is some evidence suggesting infection may also spread if you breathe in the flu virus after it becomes airborne, such as when an infected bird flaps its wings.

It is possible and even likely some limited person-to-person spread could occur with this virus; however, at this time there has been no evidence of sustained person-to-person spread.

\*No cases of H7N9 have been reported in people or birds in the United States.

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## *Travel Recommendations*

CDC does not recommend people delay or cancel trips to China, although travelers to China should take some basic precautions. Travelers who come in contact with birds or other animals should avoid touching them and wash their hands frequently. Poultry and poultry products (like chicken) should be fully cooked before eating.

## *Recommendations for Healthcare Providers*

Healthcare providers should watch for patients who develop a fever, cough or shortness of breath within 10 days of traveling to China.

*For current case information, visit\**

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-virus.htm>

Updated November 21, 2013

