



Public Health
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Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

Health Update

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

Thank you

Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Clark County Public Health
Cowlitz County Health Department
Skamania County Health Department
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services
(360) 397-8412

Please Distribute

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



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HEALTH UPDATE

May 4, 2013

TO: Physicians and other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer

RE: Novel Avian Influenza A (H7N9) Virus

The purpose of this advisory is to update providers on the Novel Avian Influenza A (H7N9) virus. There is no evidence of sustained human to human transmission, and the virus has not yet been detected outside of China or Taiwan. However, the CDC is monitoring the situation closely and relies on the cooperation of local public health and its provider network. Please review the following information, including reporting requirements and guidance for testing and treatment.

Current Situation:

On April 1, 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) first reported 3 human infections with a new avian influenza A (H7N9) virus in China. As of May 2, 2013, WHO is reporting 128 laboratory-confirmed cases and 26 deaths. Cases have been reported from 8 contiguous provinces in eastern China (Anhui, Fujian, Henan, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Shandong, and Zhejiang), two municipalities (Beijing and Shanghai), and Taiwan. Almost all of the confirmed cases have been sporadic, with no epidemiologic links between them. Most cases report exposure to live chickens or ducks.

Clinically most reported cases have severe respiratory illness, although mild cases have also been reported rarely. So far there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission. In a follow-up investigation of contacts of early cases, including healthcare workers, no transmission was reported. The new H7N9 virus has not been detected in people or birds in the United States.

Recommendations for physicians and other healthcare providers in Southwest Washington:

Reporting

- Healthcare providers and hospitals are required to report suspect human influenza A (H7N9) infections immediately to their local public health department (see contact information below). This includes patients that meet either of the following criteria:
 - Recent contact (<10 days since illness onset) with a confirmed or probable case of novel influenza A (H7N9)

OR

- Recent travel (<10 days since illness onset) to a country where human cases of novel influenza A (H7N9) virus have recently been detected. As of May 23, 2013, these countries include China and Taiwan
- *Laboratories* are required to immediately report lab-confirmed infections due to an unsubtypeable or novel (new or emerging non-seasonal) influenza virus to the local health jurisdiction where the patient resides.

Diagnostic Testing

- Testing for influenza A (H7N9) virus infection can be performed at the Washington State Public Health Laboratories (WA PHL). WA PHL uses CDC-developed RT-PCR assays to detect this novel virus.
- Using appropriate infection control precautions, healthcare providers should obtain a nasopharyngeal swab or aspirate from patients meeting the above criteria, place the swab or aspirate in viral transport medium, and contact their local health jurisdiction to request testing at WA PHL. Additional instructions for collecting and submitting specimens to WA PHL are available at: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5100/speccollecttrans.pdf>

Antiviral Treatment Guidance

(Interim Guidance on the Use of Antiviral Agents for Treatment of Human Infections with Avian Influenza A (H7N9))

- Because of the potential severity of illness associated with H7N9 virus infection, all H7N9 confirmed cases, probable cases, and cases under investigation should receive antiviral treatment with a neuraminidase inhibitor as early as possible.
- Treatment should be initiated even if it is more than 48 hours after onset of illness.
- Laboratory testing and initiation of antiviral treatment should occur simultaneously; do not delay treatment should when awaiting laboratory confirmation.
- For hospitalized patients and patients with severe or complicated illness should receive treatment with oral oseltamivir (and not inhaled zanamivir because of the lack of data for inhaled zanamivir in patients with severe influenza illness.
- Recommended duration of treatment for uncomplicated illness is 5 days.
- The optimal duration and dose of therapy are uncertain in severe or complicated influenza. Pending further data, consider longer courses of treatment (e.g., 10 days of treatment) for severely ill hospitalized H7N9 patients.

For More Information

- CDC influenza A H7N9 information for health professionals: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-healthprofessionals.htm>
- Interim Guidance for Infection Control Within Healthcare Settings When Caring for Patients with Confirmed, Probable, or Cases Under Investigation of Avian Influenza A(H7N9) Virus Infection: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-infection-control.htm>
- Interim Guidance on the Use of Antiviral Agents for Treatment of Human Infections with Avian Influenza A (H7N9): <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-antiviral-treatment.htm>
- CDC frequently asked questions on influenza A H7N9: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-faq.htm>
- Additional instructions for collecting and submitting specimens to WA PHL are available at: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5100/speccollecttrans.pdf>

To report notifiable conditions or if you have questions, please call:

- Clark County Public Health: (360) 397-8182
- Cowlitz County Health and Human Services: (360) 414-5599
- Skamania County Community Health: (509) 427-3850
- Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services (360) 795-6207

Thank you for your partnership.