

Avian flu

advice for travellers to Asia



Public Health
Agency

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Avian flu is currently circulating in birds in parts of China. This factsheet provides advice about avian flu for people going to Asia to celebrate the Chinese New Year (19 February – 5 March 2015).

Avian flu

Avian flu is an infectious disease that is mostly only seen in birds, particularly water fowl, shore birds and domestic poultry. It is different to the seasonal flu that humans can catch every year.

Avian flu in humans is very rare, although occasionally some strains of avian flu cause disease in humans. People that do catch avian flu have had close contact with birds.

Since 2013, there has been widespread reporting of avian influenza A (H7N9) in humans and birds in mainland China. Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan have also reported cases in people who had travelled to an area of China where H7N9 is known to be circulating.

The risk from avian influenza A (H7N9) virus is very low. However, people travelling to China can reduce the risk of exposure to the virus through simple precautions such as avoiding contact with live poultry or wild birds, avoiding uncooked bird products and practicing good hand hygiene.

Advice while you are away

If you are planning to travel to Asia to celebrate the Chinese New Year, we recommend the following precautions:

- avoid visiting live bird and animal markets (including 'wet' markets) and poultry farms;
- avoid contact with surfaces contaminated with animal faeces;
- avoid untreated bird feathers and other animal and bird waste;

- do not eat or handle undercooked or raw poultry, egg or duck dishes;
- do not pick up or touch dead or dying birds;
- do not attempt to bring any poultry products back to the UK;
- exercise good personal hygiene with regular hand washing with soap and use of alcohol-based hand rubs.

Advice for when you get back

If you become unwell with flu-like symptoms in the **10 days** after you return, you are most likely to be suffering from the normal seasonal flu, a cold or other common respiratory infections.

However, if your symptoms become more severe you should seek medical advice and tell your doctor that you travelled to Asia.

For more country specific travel health information please see the factsheet on http://www.nathnac.org/pro/factsheets/documents/chinese_ny.pdf