

CASE CATEGORIES FOR AVIAN INFLUENZA A/H5N1

Possible case:

Any individual meeting the clinical description and with an epidemiological link

Probable case:

A possible case with one positive laboratory test for Avian influenza A/H5 performed by a laboratory which is not accredited for the identification of the virus.

Nationally confirmed case:

An individual, irrespective of the clinical and epidemiological picture with a positive test for Avian influenza A/H5 or A/H5N1 performed by a laboratory accredited for the identification of the virus.

Known source of avian influenza virus include

- ▶ infected poultry and uncooked poultry products
- ▶ infected wild birds or backyard fowl
- ▶ manure and litter containing high concentrations of virus
- ▶ contaminated surfaces
- ▶ contaminated vehicles, equipment, clothing and footwear at involved sites
- ▶ contaminated air space (eg barn when movement of birds or manure may have resulted in aerosolisation of the virus)
- ▶ very close unprotected contact with individuals known to be infected with an avian influenza virus

Department of Public Health

Phone the **Disease Surveillance Unit** immediately (from 7.30am to 3.00pm Monday to Friday) on **21 332235, 21 322305, 21 324086**. Out of hours please phone **St. Luke's** telephone operator on **21 241251** and ask to speak to the **Public Health Doctor** on call.

These guidelines are to be followed when the Chief Veterinary Officer declares a case of Avian Influenza in Malta.

Date of publication 31/1/07

Guidelines for Medical Practitioners on how to deal with a suspected Human case of Avian Influenza Virus

Guidelines for Medical Practitioners on how to deal with a suspected Human case of Avian Influenza Virus

This leaflet outlines the steps a Medical Practitioner needs to take if he/she suspects that a patient is suffering from illness caused by an Avian Influenza virus. In case of difficulty, call the Disease Surveillance Unit (see back page for contact details).

The persons most at risk of Avian Influenza once an outbreak is detected in poultry or wild birds include:

- ▶ Poultry workers and their families
- ▶ Farm owners and their families
- ▶ Veterinary practitioners
- ▶ Veterinary support officers
- ▶ Hunters/trappers
- ▶ Health-care Workers

For a person to be a suspected case, he/she must fit both the clinical and epidemiological parts of the case definition below. If a person is considered to be a suspected case, then the actions listed in the second part need to be taken.

The last page of this document includes the case categories for Avian Influenza virus for your information.

Case Definition

Clinical Symptoms:

Acute onset of fever (>38°C) with signs and symptoms of acute respiratory infection (cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, coryza, headache, myalgia, malaise)

OR

Death from an unexplained acute respiratory illness

Having had close contact with dead domestic poultry or wild birds in the affected area

OR

Having been in a home or farm where sick or dead domestic poultry have been reported in the previous 6 weeks in the affected area.

AND

Epidemiological link:

At least one of the following exposures (a,b,c) within the 7 days prior to onset of symptoms:

- Contact with poultry or wild birds:** Reside in or have visited an area where Influenza A/H5N1 is currently suspected or confirmed
- Laboratory contact:** Worked in laboratory where there is potential exposure to Influenza A/H5N1
- Human contact:** Close contact (within one metre) of person reported to be probable or confirmed case of Influenza A/H5N1

If patient fits case-definition

Action taken

Call Disease Surveillance Unit immediately to explain suspicion:

Monday-Friday 7.30am - 3.00pm

Tel: 21 332235, 21 322305, 21 324086

Out of hours: Phone St.Luke's Hospital operator:

Tel: 21 241251 ask to speak to **Public Health Doctor** on call

Call Casualty Department, Tel: 112
Speak to most senior doctor
Explain suspicion
Ask for ambulance

Do not allow patient to go to the Casualty department himself

Isolate patient from other patients
Patient to wear **surgical mask**
Doctor to wear **surgical mask**

Wash hands with soap and water after any patient contact

Once patient has left, clean surfaces with alcohol-based disinfectant.

Ask Family members:

To look out for flu symptoms
Measure temperature twice daily
Call General Practitioner if they develop symptoms or fever >38°C and remain at home to be visited by doctor