**AVIAN INFLUENZA**

**WHAT IS AVIAN INFLUENZA?**

* Avian influenza, is also known as ‘avian flu’ or ‘bird flu’.
* It is a viral infection found in poultry, birds, ostriches, etc.
* Avian influenza viruses can very rarely cause infections in humans.

**WHO CAN GET AVIAN INFLUENZA?**

* People who are working on poultry/ostrich/ duck farms with birds that are infected with avian influenza (sick, dead or well-looking) are at risk of getting infected with avian influenza viruses.
* The risk of human infection is very low.
* Avian influenza viruses are rarely spread from person to person.

**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POSSIBLE AVIAN INFLUENZA INFECTIONS IN HUMANS?**

* Symptoms of avian influenza virus in humans may range from mild including flu like symptoms such as runny nose, body pains, fever, red eyes, cough, sore throat; to severe including shortness of breath, difficulty breathing.

**WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU DEVELOP SYMPTOMS?**

* When you are having flu-like symptoms such as a runny nose, body pains, fever, red eyes, cough, sore throat; or shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and you have been working in close contact with the birds/chickens/ ducks/ostriches that are infected with the avian influenza virus, you should:
	+ Inform your manager/supervisor
	+ Go to your nearest clinic and tell them that you have a cold or flu or sore eyes or difficulty breathing and that you work with birds/chickens/ducks/ostriches that may be or are infected with avian influenza.
	+ If you cannot go to the clinic, then report this to your supervisor who will help you to see a healthcare provider.
* The nurse or doctor will collect a sample from your nose and throat using a swab similar to an earbud.
* Just because you have symptoms and work with birds does not mean you are infected, only a laboratory test can confirm avian influenza.

**HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF**

* The risk of being infected with avian influenza is low, however, when you are working with infected birds/chickens/ ducks/ostriches make sure that you always wear personal protective clothing such as a face mask, gloves and overalls.
* Also follow the instructions for disinfection after work is completed.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Department of Health

Health Programmes

Communicable Disease Control (CDC)

Tel: 021 483 3156/9964/6878