

# Keeping Yourself Safe from Bird Flu:

An Important Message for People Traveling to Asia To Celebrate the Lunar New Year (February 7, 2008)

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There are several health issues that travelers to Asia should know about. Mosquito-borne illnesses, such as Malaria, Dengue Fever, and Japanese Encephalitis, are common throughout Asia. In addition, eating contaminated food and drinking contaminated water can cause illnesses such as Travelers' Diarrhea. Learn more about these diseases and how you can prevent them by visiting the [Insect and Arthropod Protection page](#) and the [Safe Food and Water page](#) of the Travelers' Health website.

Influenza (also called the flu or seasonal flu) is a common cause of illness among travelers and can be prevented through influenza vaccination. In addition, a different type of flu called H5N1 ("bird flu") has been found in poultry and wild birds in Asia, Europe and Africa. While rare, human infection and death from H5N1 infection have been reported. Most reported cases of human infection with H5N1 viruses have occurred after contact with H5N1-infected poultry or birds, but a small number of cases may have occurred following close and prolonged contact with another person who is visibly ill from H5N1 infection.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that you follow the following safety measures if you are traveling to one of these countries to celebrate the Lunar New Year:

- Bangladesh
- Burma (Myanmar)
- Cambodia
- China
- Hong Kong (SARPRC)
- India
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- Pakistan
- South Korea ( Republic of Korea)
- Thailand
- Vietnam

## **Before your trip**

- Visit CDC's [Travelers' Health website](#) to learn more about CDC travel health advice. To find information and advice specific to your trip, select your destination(s) in the pull down menu on the travelers' health homepage.
- See a travel medicine specialist or health-care provider familiar with advice for travel and make sure you have all the shots, medicine, and information you need.
- Be sure that you are up-to-date with all of your routine vaccinations, which includes a seasonal flu vaccine.
- Make sure to take basic first aid and medical supplies, such as a thermometer, alcohol-based hand gel (with 60% alcohol), and any medicines that you take regularly.

- Pack plenty of insect repellent and sunscreen.
- Check the CDC webpage [Seeking Health Care Abroad](#) and the U.S Dept. of State webpage "[Medical Information for Americans Abroad](#)" for information about what to do if you get sick overseas.

### **During your trip**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. You can use an alcohol-based hand gel when you do not have soap and your hands do not look dirty.
- Avoid close contact with ill persons.
- Remember to cover your cough:
  - Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
  - Put your used tissue in a wastebasket.
  - Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing by washing them with soap and water (or by using an alcohol-based hand gel containing at least 60% alcohol).
- Go to the doctor if you have a fever with a cough or sore throat, are having difficulty breathing, or have become very sick. Tell the doctor if you may have been around a person or animal with bird flu.
- Avoid traveling until you are well, unless you have to travel locally to get treatment for your sickness.
- Do not go to bird farms or live bird markets.
- Avoid touching:
  - Live birds, including chickens, ducks, and wild birds, even if they do not seem sick.
  - Dead or sick chickens, ducks, or any other birds.
  - Surfaces that have bird feces, blood, or other body fluids on them.
- Make sure the meat and other foods from birds that you eat, like eggs and poultry blood, are fully cooked. Egg yolks should not be runny or liquid.
- Keep raw meats away from other foods. After touching raw poultry or eggs, wash your hands and all surfaces, dishes, and utensils thoroughly with soap and water.
- Use insect repellent to prevent bites from insects and mosquitoes that transmit malaria, dengue, and other infections. If you are visiting an area with Malaria, take your malaria prevention medicine.
- Use sunscreen.
- Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of injury-related deaths worldwide, so it is important to take precautions. Don't drink and drive. Always wear a seatbelt when traveling in a moving vehicle and a helmet when you ride bicycles and motorcycles.

### **After your trip**

#### **Signs of Bird Flu**

- Pay very close attention to how you feel for at least 10 days after you get home. Go to the doctor if you have a fever with a cough or sore throat, or have trouble breathing.
- When you go to the doctor, tell your doctor that you have been to a country where people have been sick with bird flu and that you are feeling sick.
- Avoid traveling if you are sick, unless it is to go to the doctor.

## Signs of Malaria

- If you get a fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, or flu-like illness after you return AND you were in an area with malaria, go to the doctor right away and keep taking your malaria prevention medicine as directed.
- Malaria can develop up to 1 year after travel, so stay alert for fever or other signs of illness.

## Additional information

To learn more about avian influenza (“bird flu”) in people, visit these websites:

- [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Avian Influenza](#)
- [CDC Avian Influenza \(Bird Flu\)](#)

To learn more about avian influenza (“bird flu”) in poultry, please visit these websites:

- [World Organisation for Animal Health \(OIE\) Avian Influenza](#)
- [OIE Update on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Animals \(Type H5 and H7\)](#)
- [Food and Agriculture Organization](#)

For more information about staying well when you travel to East Asia and Southeast Asia, visit these webpages on the CDC website:

- [East Asia](#) Regional Destination webpage
- [South Asia](#) Regional Destination webpage
- [Southeast Asia](#) Regional Destination webpage
- [Avian Influenza: Current H5N1 Situation](#)

## Content Source:

Division of Global Migration and Quarantine

National Center for Preparedness, Detection, and Control of Infectious Diseases

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentAvianFluLunarNewYear08.aspx>