

Appendix 8: Bird flu (Avian influenza/H5N1): Information for those who are close contacts with a human case of H5N1

Who is a contact?

A contact of a human case of Avian Influenza is a person who had close contact (within three feet or 1 metre) with someone with bird flu within the past seven days.

Close contacts include household contacts (i.e. sharing the same living accommodation or overnight stay with the person while he/she was sick), and healthcare workers i.e. doctors, nurses and others who looked after and/or examined the person when sick.

Friends, work colleagues, classmates and fellow passengers on the same flight, bus, train or ferry can also be contacts. Casual contact with the ill person for example, if you passed them in the corridor at work or waved to them etc. does not mean you are a contact and does not require any further action.

What happens now that I am identified as a contact?

A Public Health Doctor will contact you to ask you a number of questions about your health and the amount / type of contact, which you had with the sick person, and will advise on what precautions you need to take.

Advice for all household and healthcare worker contacts

1. Check your temperature twice a day and look out for flu like symptoms:

Fever (38°C or 100.4°F or higher)

Flu like symptoms (cough, runny nose, sore throat, temperature or aches and pains)

Diarrhoea, stomach pains

You will be given a thermometer to measure your temperature. You will also be asked to have a blood test to check for any signs of infection with bird flu. Public Health will contact you daily to see how you are feeling. If you develop any of the symptoms listed here for up to seven days after your last contact with the sick person who has bird flu, contact the Public Health Doctor using the phone number below

2. Get vaccinated against seasonal flu (regular flu vaccine)

If you have not already been vaccinated against ordinary flu, you should get this year's flu vaccine as soon as possible. This will stop you from having human and bird flu at the same time. Having bird flu and human flu together could lead to changes (mutations) in the bird flu virus to make it more

infectious for humans. The Public Health Doctor will tell you where you can get this vaccine. The vaccine will be free.

3. Wash your hands frequently

Always wash your hands with soap and water after any contact with poultry, manure or contaminated surfaces. Hand washing is one of the most important protections against bird flu, and should be carried out frequently with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.

4. Take a drug to prevent bird flu/H5N1

You will be offered a course of Tamiflu. This is an antiviral medicine used to prevent or treat bird flu. If you do become infected with the virus, this medicine may prevent you from becoming ill or reduce the severity of the illness. This will be free of charge. Please read the Tamiflu leaflet provided by Public Health, which explains this in more detail.

Your Public Health Contact name and number are:

Name: _____

Telephone: _____