

# **Prevention of Avian Influenza - Management of Birds**

Avian influenza, a type of influenza A, is a zoonosis transmissible to humans through contact with infected birds or their droppings. For those who have contracted the disease, avian influenza presents similar clinical symptoms at the early stage as ordinary influenza, which include fever, muscle ache in the whole body, cough and sore throat. But it is more likely to result in high fever, pneumonia, respiratory failure, multi-organ failure and even death. The public should observe personal and environmental hygiene, and avoid contact with sick birds and their droppings.

## **Bird Management**

- When buying birds, pay attention to the overall health of the flock.
- Newly acquired birds must be isolated for observation in a well-ventilated place for at least two weeks. For feeding, the existing birds should be taken care of first before the newly acquired ones have their turn. Sick birds must be isolated for observation or culled at once to stop the spread of disease.
- Birds should be kept in indoor cages at all times to avoid direct contact with outside birds.
- Do not bring your birds to places where there is a congregation of other birds. When you take them out of the premises where they are kept, cover the bird cage properly with a piece of cloth.
- Feeders and drinking water containers should be kept in hygienic conditions and properly placed to avoid contact with wild birds and contaminants.
- When touching the birds or handling their droppings, you should wear waterproof gloves, mask and task-specific working clothes (such as task-specific apron). You should also wash your face and hands thoroughly before and after such contact.
- When handling bird carcasses, you should wear a surgical mask, disposable rubber gloves and a disposable apron. Sprinkle disinfectant powder over the carcasses, or cover them with disposable absorbent paper soaked with a solution of 1 part of domestic bleach to 4 parts of water for 15 minutes before packing them in double plastic bags, which should then be put in a rubbish bin as domestic refuse.

- After handling carcasses, you should wash your hands thoroughly with liquid soap or disinfect them with a disinfectant containing 70% alcohol.

### **Stop feeding wild birds and avoid joining bird release activities**

- Migratory and wild birds (in particular, waterfowls) are common hosts for avian influenza virus. They choose their roosting places according to the availability of food source. To avoid attracting a congregation of wild birds, please do not feed these birds.
- Birds which are used in release activities have already lost their ability to survive in the wild because of their long stay in captivity. It is unavoidable that following their release into an unfamiliar environment, they will be eliminated in the natural selection process. When their bodies are found, unnecessary panic will be caused to the public. Bird release activities also increase the chance for the participants to come into contact with wild birds. In view of the above, you are advised not to take part in such activities.

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