

HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI):

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENTS FOR FIELD WORKERS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Protection measures must be adopted by all field investigation workers (including those from the Department of Health Services, Department of Agriculture and relevant agencies) when conducting surveillance, infection control reviews and field visits to poultry farms, abattoirs etc. It must be stressed that general standard precautions must be used as well as a high level of hygiene practiced at all times. This includes:

- Hand washing and antiseptis (hand hygiene) especially after handling contaminated items;
- Use of personal protective equipment when handling chickens, excretions, secretions etc;
- Appropriate disinfection procedures (including for environmental clean up) and handling of waste.

2. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENTS

The following personal protective equipment is needed on every field visit especially when there is potential contact with infected chickens, their faeces or infected patients:

- √ Single use N95 (or equivalent specification) mask-ensure fitted correctly
- √ Protective eyewear that can be decontaminated
- √ Thick rubber gloves that can be decontaminated
- √ Disposable long sleeved gown
- √ Rubber boots that can be disinfected
- √ Disposable cap or head cover OR
- √ If available, a single use disposable full body suit that includes a head cover

In addition, the following items are needed:

- √ Biohazard bags
- √ Plastic bags for items to be decontaminated
- √ "zip loc" bags for disposal of used N95 (or equivalent specification) mask
- √ Personal thermometer
- √ Alcohol based hand rub solution
- √ Alcohol based disinfectant wipes for reusable protective eyewear
- √ Sodium hypochlorite (to be diluted to 1/100 of 5% solution)

3. REMOVING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Field investigative workers must be taught on proper procedures on the removal of personal protective equipment in the correct order:

1. Remove gown from neck down first, folding "dirty" surface inwards. Roll gently and tie before discarding into the biohazard bag.
2. Remove boots and place in plastic bag for decontamination ; or
3. Clean and disinfect boots by washing in soap and water followed by a disinfectant solution
4. Remove gloves (if possible decontaminate first using alcohol hand rub or wash in soapy water)
5. Use alcohol-based handrub or wash hands
6. Remove cap or head cover
7. Remove mask- by grasping elastic behind ears-do not touch the front of the mask
8. Use alcohol-based handrub or wash hands
9. Remove goggles. Disinfect using the alcohol based disinfectant wipes
10. Use alcohol handrub again or wash hands

11. Place all reusable equipment into plastic bag after it has been cleaned and disinfected
12. Place all disposable equipment into biohazard bag for incineration.

4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- √ Always practice a high level of hygiene at all times- always wash hands after every procedure, removal of personal protective equipment and after handling equipment.
- √ Field workers should reduce any contact with possible patients and infected poultry to the absolute minimum.
- √ Field workers are advised to be vaccinated with the current WHO recommended influenza vaccine at least two weeks before embarking on field visits to ensure adequate level of immunity. They are also recommended to take antiviral prophylaxis- Oseltamivir phosphate (Tamiflu).
- √ Take care not to recontaminate yourself after removal of personal protective equipment.
- √ Shower if possible after every field visit.
- √ Any items that can be used again such as rubber gloves or boots should be washed very well in soap/detergent and water. Wash twice to ensure the items are clean.
- √ Wash clothes worn during the visit thoroughly- use detergent and hot or warm water. Dry clothes in the sun.
- √ Check temperatures twice daily. Keep a personal diary of contacts. In the event of developing fever, limit contacts and seek medical advise.

Reference:

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Staff Protection: Advice for WHO staff undertaking field visits; WHO WPRO Document