

*From the Acting Chief Medical Officer*  
Dr Ian Carson



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

**HSS(MD)8/2006**

To:

All General Practitioners  
All Community Pharmacists  
A&E Departments/Minor Injuries Units

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 9052 0563  
Fax: 028 9052 0574  
Email: [ian.carson@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:ian.carson@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: HSS(MD)8/2006  
Date: March 2006

Dear Colleague

### **Information for the Public and Health Professionals on Avian Influenza**

You will be aware of recent press coverage detailing outbreaks of bird flu (Avian Influenza H5N1) affecting poultry flocks worldwide, including several locations in Europe. Recently the virus has also been identified in domestic cats and a stone marten in Germany.

It is important to remember that currently H5N1 Avian Influenza is predominantly a disease of birds. The virus does not easily pass from birds to humans. However in the rare instances where humans have become infected, as a result of contact with infected poultry, the virus has caused a severe disease with a high fatality rates in humans.

While H5N1 infection has not been reported in the UK, we think it is very important that the public is provided with clear, factual information on this issue.

We are therefore including with this letter some communication materials for display in A&E Departments, surgeries, community pharmacies and other premises. These materials are as follows:

- A3 Poster – Bird Flu Travel Advice (summary information)
- Leaflet – Bird Flu: Public Health and Animal Health Travel Advice

We also would like to remind all healthcare professionals of the algorithm produced by the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Northern Ireland (CDSC) for the management of travellers returning from areas affected by Avian Influenza H5N1 and presenting with febrile respiratory illness. This can be accessed through the CDSC(NI) website [www.cdscni.org.uk](http://www.cdscni.org.uk). In addition, practitioners are advised to read the diagnostic algorithms on Avian Influenza produced by the Health Protection Agency (HPA) which are available on their website [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk). These algorithms are being regularly updated by the HPA and practitioners are advised to check the website regularly.

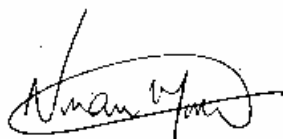
Yours sincerely

*Elizabeth Mitchell*

PP

---

**Dr Ian Carson**  
**Chief Medical Officer (Acting)**



---

**Dr Norman Morrow**  
**Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**

cc: Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (NI)  
Directors of Public Health, HSS Boards  
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services, HSS Boards/Trusts/CSA  
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control, HSS Boards  
Medical Directors, HSS Trusts  
Consultant Microbiologists

**Useful website links:**

DARD Avian Flu Information Link  
<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/birdflu/index.htm>

DEFRA Avian Flu Information Link  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/>

Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (NI)  
<http://www.cdscni.org.uk/>.

DHSSPS Home Page – [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

DHSSPS Avian Influenza Information link:  
<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/avianflu.htm>

Health Protection Agency website:  
[www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

World Health Organisation (WHO) website:  
<http://www.who.int/en/>

DHSSPS Pandemic Influenza information link:  
<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/pandemicflu.htm>