

## China bird flu: Detection of new H7N9 strain is hard

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**Singapore:** Since February 2013, more than 20 people in Shanghai in three provinces in China have been infected with the a new bird flu strain, the H7N9 virus. Most have developed a very severe respiratory illness and so far at least seven have died, informed medical adviser, International SOS.

International SOS is providing medical advice and support to organizations, travellers and expatriates in response to the new bird flu virus (H7N9) outbreak in China. As yet it does not appear to spread easily between people. It is currently unclear how these people contracted the H7N9 virus, although it may have been through direct contact with infected birds.

Unlike bird flu H5N1, birds with H7N9 may not become sick, making it harder to determine how widely the virus has spread. Antiviral medications Tamiflu and Relenza might be effective if given early in the illness. There is no vaccine available.