

Russian official warns of bird flu risk

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Russia needs to take steps to prevent a human pandemic from bird flu, a government health official said.

Viktor Maleyevussian, director of the Russian Health Ministry's Institute of Epidemiology, said Russia needs to increase public health awareness, provide training for medical staff and create a vaccination plan to deal with the risk, Novosti reported Friday.

There have been no reports of human fatalities or cases of humans infected with the virus in Russia.

Outbreaks of bird flu were first reported in southern areas of the country and Siberia in 2005. Thousands of poultry were culled in the latest outbreak near Moscow last month.

"Every incident raises tension, as there is still a lot we do not know," Maleyevussian said at bird flu conference in Bali this week. "We are only aware of 1 percent of all the micro-organisms that are in our environment, and 99 percent of them we know nothing about."

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