

Beijing H7N9 flu victim to return home

April 17 2013

A seven-year-old girl who contracted the deadly H7N9 strain of bird flu was to leave a Beijing hospital on Wednesday, staff said, as the death toll from the virus in China remained at 16.

The girl, whose parents are poultry traders, was the first confirmed human case of the virus in the capital, with scores infected in eastern China.

She was due to return home Wednesday afternoon, said a publicity officer at Beijing's Ditan hospital, who provided no further details and declined to be named.

China has confirmed 77 human cases of H7N9 [avian influenza](#) since announcing two weeks ago that it had found the strain in people for the first time.

The girl's mother and father, who had been quarantined for observation, were also set to return home, the state-run Beijing Daily newspaper said, adding that the seven-year-old was no longer showing symptoms.

[Health authorities](#) in China say they do not know exactly how the virus is spreading, but it is believed to be crossing to humans from birds, triggering mass poultry culls in several cities.

Concern has also prompted [Chinese consumers](#) to avoid eating chicken, causing huge losses to the country's poultry sector.

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization has said H7N9 shows "affinity" to humans while causing "very mild or no disease" in infected poultry, making finding the source of transmission more difficult.

The [World Health Organization](#) has said there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission.

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