

Bird flu confirmed in Canadian patient after China trip

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The first human case of H7N9 bird flu in North America has been confirmed in a Canadian woman who recently returned from a trip to China, health officials said Monday.

The patient in her 50s began feeling sick two days after returning home in Canada's westernmost British Columbia province and sought care from a doctor.

Tests confirmed that she had contracted the H7N9 virus.

"Today we are confirming the first case of H7N9 in humans in North America," Health Minister Rona Ambrose said.

Public health officials said the patient is recovering in self-isolation at home.

All of her close contacts, meanwhile, have been identified and their health is being monitored by public health authorities, according to a statement.

China has recorded 281 deaths and 470 cases since an outbreak started in March 2013 and the virus accelerated last year.

The virus ignited fears that it could mutate to become easily transmissible between people, threatening a global pandemic.

But Chinese officials and the World Health Organization have said there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission, despite occasional instances of apparent infection between family members.

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