

Evening News

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Boy, 13, dies as bird flu sweeps the Far East

A 13-YEAR-OLD boy has become the sixth person to die of bird flu in Vietnam and an eight-year-old girl is in critical condition as the virus sweeps through Southeast Asia.

The World Health Organisation said today the boy died from the H5N1 strain of avian flu, and that the girl had tested positive for the virus.

Both children were in Ho Chi Minh City and were the first confirmed human cases of bird flu in south Vietnam, which has had the country's most severe cases of flu in chickens.

The virus has killed four children and one adult in north Vietnam. Experts don't know why children have been the most affected.

"This confirms our suspicions that H5N1 would be active in the south," said Robert Dietz, spokesman for the UN agency in Hanoi.

Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and more recently Thailand and Cambodia have all reported bird flu outbreaks. Two children in Thailand have tested positive for the virus, and tests are pending on several other people.

Vietnam's animal health department has said that bird flu has broken out in 24 provinces, resulting in 3.2 million chickens slaughtered or killed by the virus.

Web links

- [Dept of Health - pandemic flu](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en)
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en>
- [WHO - Bird Flu fact sheet](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_01_15/en/)
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