

## Section 5. Enhancement of Health Risk Management System

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been promoting health risk management through establishing the required systems in accordance with the “Basic Guidelines for the Management of Health Risk” that was revised in January 2001 following restructuring of the ministries and other governmental agencies to ensure prompt and appropriate responses to health risks that threaten people’s health and lives.

More concretely, the Ministry collects information from related departments and facilities as well as national research institutions. In addition, the related bureaus and offices of the Ministry work together to exchange information on health risks such as infectious diseases, food poisoning, drug related risks, and pollution of drinking water twice a month, including an executive meeting at the “Health Risk Management Coordination Conference”, so that they can promptly implement proper health risk management measures.

Furthermore, the Ministry has established 24/7 communication system. In the case of a serious health emergency occurring the Conference will be immediately convened to take the necessary measures, including establishing a headquarters, dispatching officials and experts to the place of concern, and providing health risk-related information to people. In order to establish regional health risk management systems annual seminars are being held for prefectural officials.

Major examples of activities conducted by the Conference include responding to a series of intentional food poisoning cases triggered by the curry poisoning case in Wakayama City of 1998 and the criticality accident that took place at the uranium processing plant of JCO Co., Ltd. at Tokai-mura in 1999, measures against biochemical terrorism taken in view of the anthrax case that occurred in the United States in 2001, measures against biochemical terrorism taken after the occurrence of the Iraq issue in 2003, responding to the occurrence of the highly pathogenic bird flu appearing in Japan in 2004, and responding to the health damage cases that are suspected as being caused by frozen Chinese-style dumplings produced in China in 2008.