

Another severe case of influenza A infection in unvaccinated child reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) said today (January 21) that another case of severe paediatric influenza A infection in a child who has not yet received the seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) has been reported. This is the second reported case in children in two consecutive days. The CHP strongly urged members of the public who have not yet received the SIV to act immediately to minimise the risk of serious complications and death after infection.

"A five-year-old boy with a history of good health developed high fever and a sore throat on January 19. He went to the Accident and Emergency Department of Tuen Mun Hospital on the following day and was admitted to the hospital on the same day for treatment. His nasopharyngeal swab specimen tested positive for influenza A (H1) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with sepsis and encephalopathy. He remains hospitalised in severe condition. In the first three days this week, the CHP has received two severe cases of influenza A infection in unvaccinated children, including the one announced yesterday (January 20) which involved a [14-year-old girl](#)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The boy had no travel history during the incubation period. So far, his household contacts are asymptomatic and there has been no recent influenza outbreak at his school. An initial investigation revealed that he did not receive 2024/2025 seasonal influenza vaccination. The CHP reiterated its call to the parents to bring their children to receive the SIV as soon as possible.

"Influenza vaccination has been scientifically proven to be one of the most effective ways to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications, while significantly reducing the risk of hospitalisation and death from seasonal influenza. All persons aged 6 months and above (except those with known contraindications) who have not yet received the SIV should act immediately, particularly the elderly and children who have a higher risk of becoming infected with influenza and other complications," the spokesman said.

The spokesman reminded the public that Hong Kong has entered the influenza season. The seasonal influenza activity is expected to increase further while the activity of other respiratory infectious diseases may also increase. To protect their health and that of their family members, the public should not only receive the SIV, but also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene, and take the following measures to prevent contacting influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Wear surgical masks to prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- High-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised) should wear surgical masks when visiting public places. The general public should also wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, consider whether to go to work or school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, perform physical activity regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

â€œFor the latest information, members of the public can visit the CHP's [seasonal influenza](#) and [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) webpages.