

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 25) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against influenza.

The case involves an 8-year-old boy with good past health. He has presented with fever and cough since August 22, and visited a family doctor the next day (August 23). He was found confused and attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Prince of Wales Hospital on August 24. He was admitted for treatment on the same day. His respiratory specimen was positive for influenza A (H3) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was encephalopathy. His condition improved after treatment and was now in stable condition.

Initial enquiries by the CHP revealed that the patient had not received seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) for this season and had no travel history during the incubation period. Three of his home contacts presented with respiratory symptoms. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. SIV is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive SIV early. As it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies, members of the public are advised to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the [CHP's website](#)."

A person who gets influenza and COVID-19 at the same time may be more seriously ill and would have a higher risk of death. It is important to receive both SIV and COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible, in particular for children and elderly persons residing in the community or residential care homes. The public should also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses and note the following:

- Surgical masks can 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;
- For high-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised), 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, refrain from work or attending classes at 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.

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â€‹The public may visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) for more information.

[21 persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operations \(with photos\)](#)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations codenamed "Contribute" and "Twilight", and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Champion" and "Windsand", for four consecutive days from August 21 to yesterday (August 24). A total of 14 suspected illegal workers, four suspected employers, one suspected aider and abettor and two overstayers were arrested.

During the anti-illegal worker operations, ImmD Task Force officers raided 23 target locations including commercial buildings, industrial buildings, massage parlours, premises under renovation, restaurants and retail shops. Seven suspected illegal workers, three suspected employers and one suspected aider and abettor were arrested. The arrested suspected illegal workers comprised two men and five women, aged 26 to 51. One man and two women, aged 46 to 49, were suspected of employing the illegal workers and were arrested. One woman, aged 56, was suspected of aiding and abetting persons who breached their condition of stay in Hong Kong and was also arrested.

During operation "Champion", enforcement officers raided 88 target locations in Central district, Hung Hom and Kowloon City including restaurants and massage parlours. Six suspected illegal workers, one suspected employer and two overstayers were arrested. The arrested suspected illegal workers comprised two men and four women, aged 34 to 52. Among them,

one man was a holder of a recognisance form, which prohibits him from taking any employment. One woman, aged 36, was suspected of employing the illegal workers and was arrested. Two female overstayers, aged 36 and 38, were arrested.

Furthermore, during operation "Windsand", one female Mainland visitor, aged 39, was arrested for breaching her condition of stay by being involved in suspected illegal parallel trading activities at San Wan Road in Sheung Shui district. The goods mainly included cosmetic products and skincare products.

An ImmD spokesman said, "Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him or her shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties."

The spokesman warned, "As stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land is prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment."

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. Under the Immigration Ordinance, the maximum penalty for an employer employing a person who is not lawfully employable, i.e. an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land, has been significantly increased from a fine of \$350,000 and three years' imprisonment to a fine of \$500,000 and 10 years' imprisonment to reflect the gravity of such offences. The director, manager, secretary, partner, etc, of the company concerned may also bear criminal liability. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence.

According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and to imprisonment for one year. In that connection, the spokesman would like to remind all employers not to defy the law by employing illegal workers. The ImmD will continue to take resolute enforcement action to combat such offences.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct an initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the ImmD officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter or temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments immediately.



[EPD awards WENT Landfill Extension Contract](#)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (August 25) announced that Hong Kong Resources Recovery Park (joint venture) has won the contract to design, build and operate the West New Territories (WENT) Landfill Extension through a tendering process. The extension part of the WENT Landfill is expected to commence operation in 2026.

"Under the vision of 'Waste Reduction–Resources Circulation–Zero Landfill', the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is promoting waste reduction and recycling and, in the meantime, building an advanced and efficient network of modern waste-to-energy (WtE) facilities at full steam. Our goal is to move away from the reliance on landfills for

direct disposal of municipal solid waste by around 2035 while transforming such waste into useful energy resources, which can help Hong Kong develop into a sustainable green city and achieve the target of carbon neutrality. During the transition period before the completion of developing sufficient modern WtE incinerators, Hong Kong will still need landfills to cope with the ultimate waste disposal needs of the territory in the short to medium term, and for the disposal of waste that is non-combustible and cannot be recycled," an EPD spokesman said.

Regarding the stakeholders' comments, the EPD has taken positive feedback by not only enhancing the design of the WENT Landfill Extension but also substantially reducing its extension area by half, from the original design of about 200 hectares to about 100 hectares. Moreover, by adopting the revised "deep bowl" design, a 30-metre high (equivalent to the height of a 10-storey building) landscaped earth bund will first be constructed along the current Nim Wan Road, followed by excavation and landfilling work to be carried out at the back of the bund. This can effectively control and contain the potential nuisance of odour, dust, wastewater and noise from the landfill. Green buffer zones of 10m to 30m wide will also be provided along the site boundary to enhance the visual appearance and environmental quality. On the other hand, the considerate amount of high quality rocks generated from the extension works can be made available for uses in local reclamation works and construction industry.

Led by Alchmex International Construction Limited, Hong Kong Resources Recovery Park (joint venture) is also formed with China State Construction Engineering (Hong Kong) Limited and Veolia Hong Kong Holdings Limited. Both Alchmex International Construction Limited and China State Construction Engineering (Hong Kong) Limited are wholly-owned subsidiaries of China State Construction International Holdings Limited.

[Red flag hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach](#)

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (August 25) that due to inclement weather, the red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.

CHP investigates imported case of measles infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (August 25) investigating an imported case of measles infection and reminded the public that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

The case involves a 20-year-old man with good past health. He developed fever, sore throat, cough and myalgia since August 10 and skin rash on August 13. He visited a private doctor on August 13 and 15. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of North Lantau Hospital on August 15 and was later transferred to Princess Margaret Hospital for treatment. He is in a stable condition and was discharged yesterday (August 24).

His blood sample tested positive for immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibodies to measles virus upon laboratory testing. The patient reported that he has received measles vaccinations.

According to information provided by the patient, he travelled to Indonesia during the incubation period and did not have contact with measles patients. One of his household contacts, who had travelled with the patient, developed fever and cough yesterday while other household contacts remained asymptomatic. They have been put under medical surveillance.

Upon notification of the case, the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. Investigations are ongoing.

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. Members of the public who are planning to travel to places with a high incidence or outbreaks of measles should review their vaccination history and past medical history, especially people born outside Hong Kong who might not have received a measles vaccination during childhood. Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, with unknown vaccination history or unknown immunity against measles, are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccinations at least two weeks before departure," a spokesman for the DH said.

Measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. A patient can pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of a skin rash.

The spokesman advised, "The incubation period (the period from infection

to appearance of illness) of measles ranges from seven days to 21 days. Symptoms of measles include fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes. If symptoms arise, members of the public should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should also avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below 1. Those suspected to have been infected are advised to seek medical attention as early as possible and reveal relevant contact history of measles to healthcare professionals."

Besides being vaccinated against measles, members of the public should take the following measures to prevent infection:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- Clean used toys and furniture properly; and
- Persons with measles should be kept out of school till four days from the appearance of a rash to prevent the spread of the infection to non-immune persons in school.

â€œFor more information on measles, the public may call the 24-hour health education hotline 2833 0111 or visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). For news of measles outbreaks outside Hong Kong, please visit the website of the DH's [Travel Health Service](#).