

# Hospital Authority nursing schools open for enrolment

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Professional Diploma in Nursing Programme (PDN) of the three nursing schools under the Hospital Authority (HA) will be open for enrolment from today (April 29) to July 19. The three nursing schools located at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Caritas Medical Centre and Tuen Mun Hospital will provide a total of 300 places this year. On completion of the PDN, graduates are eligible to apply for registration as a Registered Nurse (General) under the Nursing Council of Hong Kong. Individuals aspiring to join the nursing profession are welcome to apply.

Starting from 2021, the HA has upgraded the Higher Diploma in Nursing Programme previously offered by the three nursing schools at Qualifications Framework (QF) Level 4 to Professional Diploma Programme at QF Level 5, which is equivalent to the QF level of a bachelor degree course. The PDN is characterised by a strong emphasis on both theory and practice, covering 30 core subjects with a wide variety of nursing theories and skills. The PDN also emphasises the concept of holistic care. Students are required to complete a minimum of 1 400 hours of clinical practicum, including placements in various specialties and departments in public hospitals, to accumulate comprehensive clinical experience. With the aid of diversified teaching methods and simulation training, the PDN aims to cultivate students into nursing professionals with both clinical competence and a caring spirit.

Dr Danny Tong, the Chief Manager (Nursing) of the HA, said, "The HA has always attached great importance to nurturing the next generation of nursing professionals. Apart from providing basic nursing training through the nursing schools, we also offer continuous education and training opportunities for existing nursing staff. The HA will continue to enhance the remuneration and career ladder for the nursing grade (refer to Annex 1), so as to ensure all-round development of our nurses. I encourage individuals who aspire to join the nursing profession to enrol in the HA nursing programmes and become our new nursing workforce to safeguard the health of the public."

The minimum entry requirements for the PDN Programme include attaining Level 3 or above in Chinese Language and English Language, Level 2 or above in Mathematics, "Attained" in Citizenship and Social Development and Level 2 or above in one elective subject from Category A in the Diploma of Secondary Education (DSE) Examination. Applicants with equivalent qualifications are also eligible to apply. Interviews will be arranged for eligible applicants, and successful applicants will commence their studies on September 2. For more information on the PDN and application details, please scan the QR code provided in Annex 2 or [visit the HA's website](#).

At present, the PDN is a four-year full-time programme. The HA plans to adjust the curriculum arrangements starting from the new academic year in

September, so that students can complete the PDN in as early as three and a half years, subject to formal confirmation by the Nursing Council of Hong Kong.

In addition, the School of General Nursing, Grantham Hospital, will continue to offer a two-year Enroled Nurses (General) training course this year, with 100 places available for enrolment. The application period will run from July 8 to July 22.

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## **Red flags hoisted at some beaches**

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 (April 29) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Shek O Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island, and Hung Shing Yeh Beach and Pui O Beach in Islands District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

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## **CHP investigates case of severe paediatric COVID-19 infection**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 28) investigating a case of severe paediatric COVID-19 infection and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against respiratory tract infection. The CHP stressed that vaccination can effectively prevent serious COVID-19 cases, and high-risk individuals (including pregnant women) should get vaccinated as soon as possible and receive booster doses at appropriate times. Meanwhile, the CHP also reminded high-risk persons to wear a surgical mask when visiting public places, and the public should also wear a surgical mask when taking public transportation or staying in crowded places.

The case involves a 6-month-old girl with good past health. She developed a fever, shortness of breath, cough with sputum and rhinitis since April 23. She was taken to the Union Hospital yesterday (April 27), and was referred to the Prince of Wales Hospital and admitted to the hospital's paediatric intensive care unit for treatment on the same day. Her clinical diagnosis was COVID-19 infection complicated with croup. She is now in

serious condition and is still hospitalised.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had not received COVID-19 vaccine and had no travel history during the incubation period. Her three home contacts had presented with symptoms. The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

The CHP reminded high-risk people who have never been vaccinated or infected with COVID-19 that they should arrange vaccination as soon as possible and adopt additional hygiene measures to protect themselves. Parents are also reminded to arrange COVID-19 vaccination for their babies aged 6 months or above in order to reduce the risk of severe cases and fatalities. In addition, high-risk priority groups are recommended to receive a dose of COVID-19 vaccine at least six months after the last dose or infection, regardless of the number of doses received previously. For more information on the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme and the latest recommendation on the use of vaccines, please visit the CHP's website at [www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106934.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106934.html).

Currently, there is an increasing trend in the activity of SARS-CoV-2 and seasonal influenza viruses. Apart from vaccination, in order to prevent infection of COVID-19, influenza and other respiratory illnesses as well as transmission in the community, the public should maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times 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;
- 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.

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

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## CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 28) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against influenza. The CHP appealed to members of the public to receive seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves during the influenza season.

The case involves a 3-year-old girl with good past health. She developed a fever since yesterday (April 27). She was taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on the same day for medical attention and was admitted to the paediatric intensive care unit. Her respiratory specimen was positive for influenza A (H1) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalopathy. She is now in serious condition.

Initial enquiries by the CHP revealed that the patient had not received SIV for this season and had no travel history during the incubation period. One of her home contacts developed relevant symptoms recently and has recovered. 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 one of the most effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications, as well as reducing influenza-related hospitalisation and death. 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 visiting public places. The 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, 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.

The public may visit the CHP's [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) for more information.

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## **CHP investigates suspected case of paralytic shellfish poisoning**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 28) investigating a suspected case of paralytic shellfish poisoning two members of a family.

The case involves a male and a female aged 39 and 42 respectively, who presented with limb and tongue numbness, vomiting, dizziness, weakness and unsteady gait within one hour after consuming conch, scallop and common oriental clam at home yesterday (April 27). One of the patients attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Tseung Kwan O Hospital and was admitted on the same day and is in stable condition.

Initial enquiries revealed that the concerned seafood were purchased from a seafood stall in Yeung Uk Road Market in Tsuen Wan. An investigation by the CHP is continuing.

"Paralytic shellfish poisoning toxin is a natural toxin sometimes found in bivalve shellfish. It is heat-stable and cannot be destroyed through cooking," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"The symptoms of paralytic shellfish poisoning are predominantly neurological and the onset is usually within minutes to hours after ingestion of the shellfish. Initial symptoms may include tingling, numbness of the mouth and extremities, a headache, dizziness and gastrointestinal discomfort. In the majority of cases, symptoms are resolved completely within a few days. In severe cases, difficulty in swallowing and speech, paralysis with respiratory arrest and even death may occur," the spokesman added.

The spokesman reminded members of the public that they should seek medical advice immediately if they develop shellfish poisoning symptoms, and save any leftovers for investigation and laboratory testing.

To reduce the risk of shellfish poisoning, the public should:

- Buy shellfish from reliable and licensed seafood shops;
- Remove the viscera, gonads and roe before cooking and discard any cooking liquid before consumption;
- Eat a smaller amount of shellfish in any one meal; and
- When symptoms occur after consuming shellfish, seek medical advice immediately.