

CHP appeals to parents to arrange seasonal influenza vaccination for their children as soon as possible

â€‹The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (November 15) appealed to parents again to arrange early seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) for their children with a view to having better protection in the coming influenza season in winter.

The 2024/25 SIV Programmes started on September 26 this year. At present, around 970 kindergartens and child care centres (92 per cent), 630 primary schools (96 per cent) and 470 secondary schools (93 per cent) have completed or are arranging the SIV school outreach activities. This is higher than the participation rate last year (about 80 per cent of kindergartens and child care centres, about 95 per cent of primary schools and about 70 per cent of secondary schools). As of November 10, 2024, around 1 100 schools have completed the vaccination, and more than 255 000 students have received SIV under SIV school outreach programmes.

The DH continues inviting all schools in Hong Kong through the Education Bureau to participate in outreach programmes. Upon commencement of the 2024/25 SIV Programmes, the DH has reached out to non-participating schools one by one to understand their difficulties, offer necessary assistance and facilitate their participation in the programmes, so as to seize the optimum timing for receiving SIV for schoolchildren.

To boost the SIV coverage rate among schoolchildren, special arrangements have been made under the outreach programmes this year to offer a more flexible choice of vaccine options for kindergartens and child care centres. Kindergartens and child care centres can choose to provide both injectable inactivated influenza vaccines and live attenuated influenza vaccines (i.e. nasal vaccines) (LAIV) at the same or different outreach vaccination activities. As a pilot scheme, LAIV is also provided to selected primary and secondary schools that indicated their preference for LAIV earlier this year.

According to local experience, school outreach can double the SIV vaccination rate of schoolchildren. School outreach could offer a convenient option for parents and allow students to receive outreach vaccination service by healthcare personnel in a familiar and relaxed environment at school, which effectively strengthen their immunity barrier. Home-school co-operation has been of vital importance in enhancing vaccination coverage. However, the CHP has noticed that so far there are [145 schools](#) still have not arranged SIV outreach activities. The CHP again strongly urges concerned schools should arrange SIV outreach activities as soon as possible for the convenience of parents as well as to protect students and reduce the chance of influenza outbreaks in schools. For eligible children not receiving SIV through school

outreach activities, parents should arrange vaccination for their children as soon as possible at clinics of private doctors enrolled in the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS). The Government will provide a subsidy of \$260 per dose for the vaccination. Over half of the enrolled VSS doctors will not charge extra in addition to the Government's subsidy. For the list of VSS doctors, please visit: apps.hcv.gov.hk/Public/en/SPS/Search.

In addition, as of November 10, the SIV coverage rate for children aged 6 months to under 2 years was at a low level of about 11.5 per cent. To strengthen vaccination services and boost the SIV coverage rate among children aged 6 months to under 2 years, the DH's Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) are open to all children aged 6 months to under 2 years for SIV this year. Children aged 6 months to under 2 years can receive SIV at any MCHCs at the same time when they are attending appointments. Parents may also book an appointment for their children to receive vaccination at designated MCHCs via the online booking system: booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/sivfhs/index.jsp.

"According to the further analysis of the relationship between SIV and 31 cases of severe paediatric influenza-associated complications and deaths recorded during the influenza season from January to July this year, the CHP found that the rate of children aged between 6 months and 17 years who had not received the SIV of that season and subsequently contracted influenza with severe complications or deaths, was about 3.2 times that of the vaccinated children. The protective effect is more pronounced in younger children, for example, in the 2- to 5-year-old age group, the concerned rate among unvaccinated children was about 6.4 times that of vaccinated children. Based on this, SIV is one of the most effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications. All children aged 6 months or above, except those with known contraindications, are recommended to receive the SIV for personal protection," a CHP spokesperson said.

For the latest information, please refer to the CHP's [influenza page](#) and [Vaccination Schemes page](#).