

CHP investigates a fatal case of paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (July 9) investigating a fatal case of paediatric influenza A infection.

The nine-year-old girl, with underlying illnesses, has developed fever and convulsion since July 1. She was admitted to Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital on July 1 and was subsequently transferred to the paediatric intensive care unit of Prince of Wales Hospital for further management on July 2. Her condition deteriorated after admission and she passed away on July 4.

Her nasopharyngeal aspirate tested positive for influenza A (H3) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A complicated with encephalitis.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had received seasonal influenza vaccination for the current season and had no travel history in the incubation period. Her elder brother had upper respiratory tract infection symptoms since June 27 and had recovered. Her other home contacts are asymptomatic so far.

The case was referred to the Coroner for investigation.

Epidemiological investigations revealed that there was an outbreak of influenza A infection in the school the girl attended. Apart from the patient, 12 students (nine boys and three girls) aged 6 to 17 and two staff members of the school have developed fever, cough and sore throat since June 27. All have sought medical attention and nine students required hospitalisation. They are now in a stable condition.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit to the school and advised the management on necessary infection control and preventive measures. The school has been put under medical surveillance.

The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- 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 as an effective alternative;

- Wash or clean hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, or after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs;
- Cover the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).