

CHP investigates and updates on two outbreaks of acute gastroenteritis in schools

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 7) is investigating an outbreak of acute gastroenteritis (AGE) at a kindergarten-cum-child care centre in Ma Wan, and reporting a further update on its investigation into an outbreak of AGE in a kindergarten in Sha Tin announced on October 17. The CHP reminded the public and management of institutions to maintain personal and environmental hygiene against AGE.

The outbreak at the kindergarten-cum-child care centre in Ma Wan involves 14 boys and six girls aged 2 to 5, who developed fever, vomiting and diarrhoea since October 31. All of them sought medical attention. Among them, two required hospitalisation and were discharged after treatment. Upon laboratory testing, stool specimens of the two hospitalised children tested positive for norovirus. All patients have been in a stable condition.

For the outbreak in the kindergarten in Sha Tin, according to the latest information provided by the school, the CHP identified 39 additional affected children, comprising 15 boys and 24 girls aged 3 to 5, bringing the cumulative total to 59 children. Forty-six of them have sought medical attention. Among them, two required hospitalisation and one was discharged after treatment. All affected children have been in stable condition.

Officers of the CHP have conducted site visits and provided health advice to the staff of the schools concerning proper and thorough cleansing and disinfection, proper disposal of vomitus, and personal and environmental hygiene. The schools have been put under medical surveillance.

For the kindergarten in Sha Tin, officers of the CHP again reminded the school management to adopt preventive measures against gastroenteritis. As a precautionary measure, classes will be suspended from November 8 to November 10 at this kindergarten for conducting a thorough environmental disinfection.

A spokesman for the CHP advised members of the public to take heed of the following preventive measures against gastroenteritis:

- Ensure proper personal hygiene;
- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food and eating, after using the toilet or after changing diapers;
- Wear gloves when disposing of vomitus or faecal matter, and wash hands afterwards;
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas or items promptly and thoroughly with diluted household bleach (by adding one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite to 49 parts of water). Wash hands thoroughly afterwards;

- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Pay attention to food hygiene;
- Use separate utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Avoid food that is not thoroughly cooked;
- Drink boiled water; and
- Do not patronise unlicensed food premises or food stalls.

The public may visit the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk) or call the Health Education Hotline (2833 0111) for more information.