[CHP investigates case of invasive pneumococcal infection](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 10) investigating a case of invasive pneumococcal infection, and reminded the public to observe hygiene practices against the disease.

The patient was a 30-month-old boy, who developed fever, vomiting, choking and convulsion on November 26. He was brought to Caritas Medical Centre for medical attention on the same day and was directly transferred to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit of Princess Margaret Hospital for further management. His condition deteriorated and he died this morning.

His blood specimen tested positive for Streptococcus pneumoniae upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was pneumococcal bacteraemia.

Initial enquiries revealed that the boy had received pneumococcal vaccines. He had no recent travel history and his home contacts remained asymptomatic. No other similar cases or outbreaks have been reported so far at the nursery he attended. Investigations are ongoing.

"Pneumococcal infection is caused by the bacteria Streptococcus pneumoniae (pneumococcus). It causes a wide range of diseases. More common ones include middle ear infection and chest infection. It may also cause various forms of invasive pneumococcal diseases, such as infection of the brain membranes and blood stream. The infection can be serious or even life-threatening," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Pneumococci are commonly found in the nose and throat of healthy people, particularly in children. Occasionally, these bacteria will cause an infection. They mainly spread through droplets via coughing and sneezing, close contact with the patients or contact with materials soiled with the bacteria.

To prevent pneumococcal infection, the CHP appealed to the public for pneumococcal vaccination and hygiene practices:

- Keep hands clean at all times. Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly. When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Cover nose and mouth with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of the soiled tissue paper into a lidded rubbish bin, and then wash hands thoroughly;
- Put on a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms;

- Maintain good indoor ventilation. Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks while in such places; and
- Refrain from work or school when having respiratory symptoms. Seek medical advice if symptoms persist or deteriorate.

    The public may visit the CHP's [invasive pneumococcal disease page](#) for more information.