

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 3) investigating a case of severe paediatric COVID-19 and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against respiratory tract infection in winter. 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 4-year-old boy with good past health. He had been to Australia during the incubation period, and developed fever, cough with sputum and tiredness on December 29 last year while there. He tested positive for COVID-19 by rapid antigen test on January 1 after returning to Hong Kong. He presented with shortness of breath the next day (January 2), and was brought to a private doctor and the Accident and Emergency Department of Tuen Mun Hospital for medical attention respectively on the same day. He was admitted to the paediatric intensive care unit of the hospital for treatment. His respiratory specimen tested positive for the COVID-19 virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was severe pneumonia. He is now in serious condition and is still hospitalised.

Initial enquiries by the CHP revealed that the patient had not received a COVID-19 vaccine. His three home contacts had presented with symptoms.

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.

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.

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