

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (February 2) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection.

The case involves a 6-year-old boy with good past health, who has presented with fever, cough and runny nose since January 31 and developed convulsion yesterday (February 1). He was taken to the Accident and Emergency Department of Queen Mary Hospital for medical attention yesterday and was admitted. He was transferred to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit of the Hospital today for further management.

His nasopharyngeal aspirate tested positive for influenza A (H1) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalopathy. He is now in a serious condition.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had not received seasonal influenza vaccination for the current season and had travelled to Shenzhen during the incubation period. His parents developed upper respiratory tract infection symptoms recently and have sought medical attention. Both are in a stable condition and no hospitalisation is required.

The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

"While the percentage that tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses among the respiratory specimens received by the CHP's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch has slightly decreased in the past week, we expect that the local influenza activity may remain at an elevated level for some time. We urge the community to continue heightening its vigilance against seasonal influenza. As young children are particularly affected in this influenza season, we appeal to parents who have not yet arranged vaccination for their children in this season to do so as soon as possible to strengthen their personal protection," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Apart from children, people aged 50 to 64 years, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses who have not yet received influenza vaccination this season are also urged to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination. Medical advice should be sought promptly if influenza-like symptoms develop so that appropriate treatment can be initiated as early as possible to prevent potential complications. Parents and carers are reminded to render assistance in prevention, care and control for vulnerable people.

Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory

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