

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (February 3) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection.

The case involves a 6-year-old girl with good past health, who has presented with fever, cough and runny nose since January 24. She was admitted to the Hong Kong Sanatorium and Hospital for treatment yesterday (February 2) and was transferred to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit of Queen Mary Hospital on the same day for further management.

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

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had not received seasonal influenza vaccination for the current season and had no travel history during the incubation period. Her home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far.

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](#).