

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (September 25) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against influenza.

The case involves a 9-year-old girl with underlying illnesses, who has presented with a fever, cough, wheezing and shortness of breath since September 24. She was admitted to Queen Mary Hospital on the same day. She was transferred to the paediatric intensive care unit of Queen Mary Hospital for treatment on September 25. Her respiratory specimen was positive for influenza A (H3) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with respiratory failure secondary to aspiration pneumonia. Her condition is now in serious condition.

Initial enquiries by the CHP revealed that the patient had no travel history during the incubation period. One of her home contacts is currently symptomatic. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP stated that the public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses 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;
- For high-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised), wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. 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 CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) for more information.