

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection at RCHE in Kwai Tsing

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (January 30) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and an outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection (URI) at a residential care home for the elderly (RCHE) in Kwai Tsing.

The paediatric case involves a 16-year-old girl with good past health, who has presented with fever, cough and sore throat since January 28. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Pok Oi Hospital for medical attention on January 29. She was first transferred to the paediatric intensive care unit of Tuen Mun Hospital and then transferred to the intensive care unit of Queen Mary Hospital today for further management. Her nasopharyngeal swab tested positive for influenza A (H3) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with severe pneumonia. She is now in a critical condition.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had received seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) for the current season and had no travel history during the incubation period. Her home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far.

The outbreak of URI at the RCHE in Kwai Tsing affected 11 female residents aged 72 to 106, as well as 10 female staff members, who have developed URI symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat and runny nose since January 7. All of them sought medical attention. Among them, two required hospitalisation. One of them passed away and the other one was discharged following treatment. All patients are now in stable condition. The nasopharyngeal swabs of two patients tested positive for rhinovirus upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit and advised the RCHE to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory tract infections. The RCHE has been placed under medical surveillance.

"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 DH 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](#).