

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and outbreaks of influenza A at RCHD and kindergarten-cum-child care centre

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 21) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection, as well as influenza A outbreaks at a residential care home for persons with disabilities (RCHD) in Tsuen Wan and a kindergarten-cum-child care centre in Yuen Long.

The case of severe paediatric influenza A infection involves a 3-year-old boy with good past health, who has presented with fever, cough and shortness of breath since January 7. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Kwong Wah Hospital on January 15 and was admitted to the hospital on the same day. He later developed respiratory failure and was transferred to the paediatric intensive care unit of the hospital for further management. His nasopharyngeal aspirate tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with severe pneumonia. He is now in a stable condition.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had received seasonal influenza vaccination for the current season and had no travel history during the incubation period. His home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

The outbreak at the RCHD involves 15 male residents and three female residents, aged 23 to 62, as well as two female staff members. They have developed fever, cough and sore throat since January 11. All sought medical attention. Fifteen of them required hospitalisation and 13 of them were discharged following treatment. All patients are in a stable condition. The respiratory specimens of 14 residents tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing, six of which tested positive for influenza A (H1) virus.

For the outbreak at the kindergarten-cum-child care centre, it involves 12 boys and nine girls, aged 3 to 5, who have developed similar symptoms since January 9. All of them sought medical attention. Three required hospitalisation and were discharged following treatment. All patients are in a stable condition. The respiratory specimens of seven affected students tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing, two of which tested positive for influenza A (H1) virus.

"The latest surveillance data indicated that the local seasonal influenza activity has continued to increase in the past two weeks and may continue to rise in the period ahead. We urge the community to continue heightening their 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," the spokesman added.

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](#).