

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and two outbreaks of influenza A at kindergartens

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 18) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection, as well as two influenza A outbreaks at kindergartens in Tung Chung and Fanling.

The case of severe paediatric influenza A infection involves a 4-year-old boy with good past health, who has presented with fever, cough and runny nose since January 15 and convulsion on January 17. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of United Christian Hospital on January 17 and was transferred to the paediatric intensive care unit of the hospital on the same day for further management. His respiratory specimen tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalopathy. He is now in a critical 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. His parents had upper respiratory tract infection symptoms recently. His father is now recovered while his mother has been advised to seek medical attention. Both have been in a stable condition. His other home contact has remained asymptomatic so far. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

Regarding the outbreaks at kindergartens, the case in Tung Chung affected 12 boys and seven girls, aged 3 to 5, as well as one female staff member, who have developed fever, cough and sore throat since January 5. Nineteen of them sought medical attention. One of them required hospitalisation and was discharged upon management. They have been in a stable condition. The nasopharyngeal swab specimen of one affected student tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing.

Another case in Fanling affected eight boys and 12 girls, aged 3 to 6, who have developed similar symptoms since January 7. All sought medical attention. Two of them required hospitalisation and were discharged upon management. They have been in a stable condition. The nasopharyngeal specimens of five affected students tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing.

"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 urged the community to continue heightening their vigilance against seasonal influenza. As young children are

particularly affected in this influenza season, we appealed 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.

"Particularly, children, people aged 50 to 64 years, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses who have not yet received influenza vaccination this season are 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. They should promptly seek medical advice 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](#).