

CHP investigates five outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 9) investigating five outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI), affecting three nursery schools, one kindergarten and one primary school. The CHP strongly appealed to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene as an increasing number of institutional URTI outbreaks has been recorded recently.

For the three outbreaks at nursery schools, the first one was in Sham Shui Po which involves 14 boys and 13 girls aged 11 months to 5 who developed cough and runny nose since November 6. Twenty-five of them sought medical attention.

The second one was in Yuen Long, affecting 13 boys and 10 girls aged 2 to 5 who developed fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat since November 1. Seventeen of them sought medical attention.

The third nursery school was in Sha Tin and the outbreak affects 16 boys and 18 girls aged 2 to 5, as well as one staff member. They developed fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat since November 5. Thirty-one of them sought medical attention.

For the outbreak at a kindergarten in Tung Chung, it involves 11 boys and 13 girls aged 3 to 5, as well as three staff members. They developed fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat since November 2. Seventeen of them sought medical attention.

The outbreak at the primary school was in Yau Tsim Mong district, affecting 12 boys and 11 girls aged 6 to 10 who developed fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat since November 4. All sought medical attention.

All of the patients are now in stable condition and none required hospitalisation.

Officers of the CHP have either conducted site visits or contacted the schools to arrange a site visit. The schools are advised to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory infections and have been put under medical surveillance.

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses.

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- A surgical mask 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;

- 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 nose and mouth 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 class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

Members of the public, particularly children, the elderly and those with chronic diseases, should wear a face mask and consult a doctor promptly if they develop symptoms of respiratory tract infection.