

CHP investigates influenza A outbreak at elderly home in Wong Tai Sin

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 28) investigating an influenza A outbreak at a residential care home for the elderly (RCHE) in Wong Tai Sin, and again reminded the public to maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene against influenza.

"The latest surveillance data showed that the overall influenza activity in Hong Kong continued to increase. It is anticipated that the local influenza activity will further increase and the winter influenza season will arrive soon. Members of the public should maintain good personal protection against influenza," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The outbreak involves 21 male residents aged 67 to 95 and a staff member. They have developed fever, cough and sore throat since December 22. All sought medical attention. Among them, 20 required hospitalisation and six of them were discharged following treatment. All patients have been in a stable condition.

The respiratory specimens of 18 residents tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing.

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

RCHEs are reminded to follow the [Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases](#) on preventive and control measures as well as management of outbreaks, which should be reported to the CHP for prompt follow-up.

"Particularly, children, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses are urged to receive influenza vaccination 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.

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- 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 as an effective alternative;
- Wash or clean hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, or after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs;
- Cover the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).