

CHP investigates influenza A outbreak at kindergarten in Kwai Tsing

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 18) investigating an influenza A outbreak at a kindergarten in Kwai Tsing.

The outbreak involves 10 boys and 10 girls aged 3 to 6, who have developed fever, cough, sore throat and runny nose since October 12. Nineteen of them sought medical attention. Five patients required hospitalisation and three of them were discharged after treatment. All patients are in a stable condition.

The nasopharyngeal swab of three students tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing.

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

A spokesman for the CHP said, "To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that children with fever, regardless of the presence of respiratory symptoms, should not be allowed to attend school. They should seek medical advice and avoid school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided. Schools should also measure and record students' body temperature properly."

Schools 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.

The Vaccination Subsidy Scheme 2018/19 was launched on October 10. The spokesman for the CHP urged eligible persons to receive subsidised seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves in the coming winter influenza season.

"Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. Given that influenza vaccines are safe and effective, all persons aged 6 months or above, except those with known contraindications, are recommended to receive SIV for personal protection," the spokesman said.

"Based on past epidemiological patterns, the winter influenza season usually occurs from January to March/April each year. As it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies, we urge eligible persons to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza. Vaccination among family members is key to protecting their personal and family's health."

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for

protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Receive SIV 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](#).