

CHP investigates influenza A outbreak at primary school in Sham Shui Po

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 30) investigating an influenza A outbreak at a primary school in Sham Shui Po, and appealed to the community for heightened vigilance against influenza.

The outbreak involves 14 boys and six girls aged 6 to 10 who developed fevers, coughs and sore throats since October 19. All of them sought medical attention. One required hospitalisation and has been discharged upon treatment. All are in a stable condition. The respiratory specimen of the hospitalised child tested positive for influenza A (H3) upon laboratory testing.

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

A spokesman for the CHP said, "To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that students with fevers, 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 temperatures 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.

"Although the overall local seasonal influenza activity is currently at a low level, members of the public are advised to receive a seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves in the coming winter influenza season. Particularly, children, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses are urged to get vaccinated as early as possible as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination," the spokesman added.

The 2019/20 seasonal influenza vaccination programmes, including the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme and the Government Vaccination Programme, have been launched on October 9 and 23 respectively. As well, the SIV school outreach has been regularised to allow all primary schools to join, and has been extended to kindergartens, child care centres, and kindergarten-cum-child care centres as a pilot.

"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 SIVs for personal protection. Vaccinations among family members is key to protecting their personal and family's health," the spokesman said.

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

- Receive SIVs 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.

The public may visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#) for more information.