

CHP investigates outbreak of acute gastroenteritis at kindergarten-cum-child care centre in Wan Chai

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (May 12) investigating an outbreak of acute gastroenteritis (AGE) at a kindergarten-cum-child care centre in Wan Chai, and hence reminded the public and management of institutions to maintain personal and environmental hygiene against AGE.

The outbreak involves 20 pupils comprising nine males and 11 females aged 2 to 6. Ten of them sought medical attention and one required hospitalisation. All patients are in stable condition.

According to the CHP's epidemiological investigation, one of the students had an onset of a symptom (vomiting in a classroom) earliest on May 10. Other students developed symptoms including vomiting and diarrhoea from May 11. The investigation results revealed that there was an outbreak of AGE in the affected kindergarten-cum-child care centre, with a higher chance of person-to-person transmission or environmental contamination. The chance of involving food poisoning is relatively low. For the sake of prudence, officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit this afternoon together with officers of the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, and no unusual situation was found in the food production environment hygiene of the school during the preliminary assessment.

Officers of the CHP have provided health advice to the staff of the school concerning proper and thorough disinfection, proper disposal of vomitus, and personal and environmental hygiene. The school has been put under medical surveillance.

Investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP advised members of the public to take heed of the following preventive measures against gastroenteritis:

- Ensure proper personal hygiene;
- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food and eating, after using the toilet or after changing diapers;
- Wear gloves when disposing of vomitus or faecal matter, and wash hands afterwards;
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas or items promptly and thoroughly with diluted household bleach (by adding one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite to 49 parts of water). Wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- As alcohol does not effectively kill some viruses e.g. norovirus, alcohol-based handrub should not substitute hand hygiene with liquid

soap and water;

- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Pay attention to food hygiene;
- Use separate utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Avoid food that is not thoroughly cooked;
- Drink boiled water; and
- Do not patronise unlicensed food premises or food stalls.

â€‹The public may visit the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk) or call the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111) for more information.