

CHP investigates outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 29) investigating an outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection at a special school in Kowloon City, and appealed to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

The outbreak involves 14 male students and four female students aged 8 to 19 and two staff members who developed fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat since October 24. All of them sought medical attention. Among them, 10 students required hospitalisation. The respiratory specimens of five students tested positive for rhinovirus/enterovirus upon laboratory testing. All of them are now in a stable condition.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit and advised the school to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory infections. The school has 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;
- Surgical masks 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 your 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, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- 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.