

CHP investigates outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 6) investigating an outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) at a kindergarten in Yuen Long, and appealed to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene as an increasing number of institutional URTI outbreaks has been recorded recently.

The outbreak involves 17 boys and 17 girls aged 3 to 5 who developed cough, runny nose and sore throat since November 2. Twenty of them sought medical attention and none required hospitalisation. All of them are now in 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;
- A surgical mask 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 one's 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. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- 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.