

CHP investigates outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection at kindergarten in Sha Tin

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 11) investigating an outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection (URI) at a kindergarten in Sha Tin, and appealed to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

The outbreak affected 12 boys and eight girls aged 2 to 5, who have developed URI symptoms including fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat since September 20. Twelve of them sought medical attention. Among them, one required hospitalisation and was discharged after treatment. All patients are now in stable condition.

The nasopharyngeal swab of one boy tested positive for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) upon laboratory testing.

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

A CHP spokesman said RSV infection occurs throughout the year in Hong Kong. RSV may cause respiratory tract diseases such as infection of the airway, lungs and middle ear.

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

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination 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;
- 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.

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.