

CHP investigates outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection at residential care home for persons with disabilities

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 10) investigating an outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection (URI) at a residential care home for persons with disabilities (RCHD) in Sham Shui Po, and appealed to members of the public to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

The outbreak involves five male and 12 female residents aged 50 to 82, as well as two male and one female staff members. They have developed URI symptoms including runny nose, cough, sore throat and fever since May 24. Sixteen of them sought medical attention. Among them, three required hospitalisation and one was discharged following treatment. All patients are now in a stable condition. The respiratory specimens of two patients tested positive for respiratory syncytial virus upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP conducted a site visit and advised the RCHD to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory tract infections. The RCHD has been placed 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;
- 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.