

CHP investigates outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection and influenza A at schools/institution

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (September 28) investigating two outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) at a residential child care centre and a secondary school, as well as an influenza A outbreak at a primary school. The CHP appeals to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

The first URTI outbreak at the residential child care centre in Central and Western District involves 25 children, comprising 17 boys and eight girls aged 4 months to 35 months, and two staff members. They developed symptoms since September 22. Fifteen of them sought medical attention and three of them required hospitalisation, and one of them was discharged following treatment. Three of them tested positive for enterovirus/rhinovirus upon laboratory testing. All of them are in stable condition.

The second outbreak at the secondary school in Kwai Tsing involves 19 students, comprising eight boys and 11 girls aged 13 to 15, and a staff member. They developed symptoms since September 25. All of them sought medical attention. None of them required hospitalisation. All of them are in stable condition.

The influenza A outbreak at the primary school in Kowloon Tong involves 27 children, comprising 14 boys and 13 girls aged 6 to 8. They developed fever, cough, sore throat and runny nose since September 13. Twenty-two of them sought medical attention and two of them required hospitalisation. All of them are now in a stable condition. The respiratory specimens of one of the affected students tested positive for influenza A (H1) virus.

The CHP has provided appropriate infection control advice to the three institutions, such as to arrange cleaning and disinfection, to open windows where appropriate for better ventilation and to separate affected students from other children and students, etc. The centre, the secondary school and the primary school have been placed under medical surveillance.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that children with fever, regardless of the presence of respiratory symptoms, should not be allowed to attend school, and should consult a doctor promptly. In addition, particularly, children, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses are urged to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza."

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses, and note the following:

- 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;
- For high-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised), 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 classes 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.

â€‹The public may visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) for more information.