

CHP investigates outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection at two kindergartens

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 20) investigating outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) at two kindergartens in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung, and appeals to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

The outbreak in the kindergarten in Tsuen Wan involves 21 students, comprising five males and 16 females aged 3 to 5. They developed symptoms since February 10. Twelve of them sought medical attention, and hospitalisation was required for one child who tested positive for respiratory syncytial virus. All of them are in stable condition. Their COVID-19 rapid antigen test results were negative.

The outbreak in the kindergarten in Kwai Chung involves 23 students, comprising 12 males and 11 females aged 3 to 5; and a staff member. They developed symptoms since February 9. Thirteen of them sought medical attention, all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation. Their COVID-19 rapid antigen test results were negative.

The CHP has provided preventive advice against URTI to the schools, such as advising the schools to arrange cleaning and disinfection, to open windows where appropriate for better ventilation and to separate affected students from other students, etc. The schools have been placed under medical surveillance.

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

- 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 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.

Members of the public, particularly children, the elderly and those with chronic diseases, should consult a doctor promptly if they develop symptoms of respiratory tract infection.