

CHP investigates seven outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 18) investigating seven outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI), affecting seven primary schools. The CHP strongly 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.

Taking account of the epidemic situation of COVID-19 and the trend of URTI outbreaks in schools recently, as a prudent and precautionary measure, the CHP will arrange distribution of deep throat saliva specimen bottles for schools with URTI outbreaks and provide COVID-19 testing to all staff members and students of the affected classes. The CHP will also advise the schools to suspend face-to-face classes and activities for at least seven days until test results are available.

The arrangement to suspend face-to-face classes for seven days is applicable to schools which are identified by the CHP starting today or afterwards that an URTI outbreak has been established. The CHP will continue to evaluate the outbreak situation of individual schools and institutions, and advise the corresponding arrangements of class suspension.

Details of the outbreaks are listed in the table below:

Type of school (District)	Number of people affected and details of medical attention	Earliest onset date	Symptoms
Case 1: Primary School (Central and Western District)	29 girls (aged 6 to 9) and one staff member; four of them sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	November 10	Fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat
Case 2 : Primary School (Wan Chai)	One boy and 25 girls (aged 6 to 9) ; 21 of them sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	November 11	Fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat

Case 3: Primary School (Kwun Tong)	18 boys and 13 girls (aged 6 to 9) ; 25 of them sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	November 10	Fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat
Case 4: Primary School (Kwun Tong)	Nine boys and 12 girls (aged 6 to 10); 19 of them sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	November 6	Cough, runny nose and sore throat
Case 5: Primary School (Sham Shui Po)	13 boys and eight girls (aged 6 to 10) ; nine of them sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	November 12	Cough, runny nose and sore throat
Case 6: Primary School (Sha Tin)	Five boys and 15 girls (aged 6 to 10); 16 of them sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	November 7	Fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat
Case 7: Primary School (Yuen Long)	11 boys and nine girls (aged 6 to 9); 17 of them sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	November 12	Cough, runny nose and sore throat

The schools are advised to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory infections and have 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.