

CHP investigates three outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 6) investigating three outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI), and appeals to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

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: Residential child care centre (Causeway Bay)	12 boys and eight girls (between 5 and 28 months old); all sought medical attention and 10 required hospitalisation, of which seven had been discharged; all are in stable condition	November 20	Fever, cough and runny nose
Case 2: Kindergarten (Happy Valley)	11 boys and 12 girls (aged 3 to 4); 21 sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	November 25	Fever, cough and runny nose
Case 3: Secondary school (Sha Tin)	Four male and 22 female students (aged 16 to 20); four sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	November 29	Cough, sore throat and runny nose

Officers of the CHP have advised the residential child care centre, kindergarten and secondary school to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory infections. They have been put under medical surveillance. In addition, since the symptoms of URTI are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, the kindergarten (case 2) and secondary school (case 3) were covered in the compulsory testing notices on November 29 and December 2 respectively, and the CHP had provided the residential child care centre (case 1) with stool specimen bottles and deep throat saliva specimen collection packs direct to exclude the possibility of COVID-19 infection. The kindergarten and secondary school had suspended teaching activities for at least five days as required for cleaning and executing the compulsory testing notices.

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 wear a face mask and consult a doctor promptly if they develop symptoms of respiratory tract infection.