

CHP investigates two outbreaks of acute gastroenteritis

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 17) investigating two outbreaks of acute gastroenteritis (AGE) involving two kindergartens in Ho Man Tin and Sha Tin, and hence reminded the public and management of institutions to maintain personal and environmental hygiene against AGE.

The outbreak at the kindergarten in Ho Man Tin involves 14 boys and 12 girls aged 2 to 6, who developed fever, vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain since October 16. Fourteen of them sought medical attention and one required hospitalisation. All patients have all along been in a stable condition.

The outbreak at the kindergarten in Sha Tin involves 10 boys and 10 girls aged 3 to 4, who developed vomiting and diarrhoea since October 9. Sixteen of them sought medical attention. Among them, one required hospitalisation and was discharged after treatment. Upon laboratory testing, the stool specimen of the hospitalised child tested positive for norovirus. They have all along been in a stable condition.

Officers of the CHP have conducted site visits and provided health advice to the staff of the schools concerning proper and thorough disinfection, proper disposal of vomitus, and personal and environmental hygiene. The schools have been put under medical surveillance.

The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP advised members of the public to take heed of the following preventive measures against gastroenteritis:

- Ensure proper personal hygiene;
- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food and eating, after using the toilet or after changing diapers;
- Wear gloves when disposing of vomitus or faecal matter, and wash hands afterwards;
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas or items promptly and thoroughly with diluted household bleach (by adding one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite to 49 parts of water). Wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Pay attention to food hygiene;
- Use separate utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Avoid food that is not thoroughly cooked;
- Drink boiled water; and
- Do not patronise unlicensed food premises or food stalls.

The public may visit the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk) or call the Health Education Hotline (2833 0111) for more information.