

CHP investigates two outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 28) investigating two 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	Date of issuing CTN
Case 1: Kindergarten (Tseung Kwan O)	12 girls and 8 boys (aged 3 to 5); 3 sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	September 17	Cough, runny nose, fever and sore throat	September 23
Case 2: Special school (To Kwa Wan)	7 males and 7 females (aged 8 to 22) and 6 staff members; all of them sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and 10 required hospitalisation	October 9	Cough, runny nose, fever and sore throat	October 15

Officers of the CHP have advised the kindergarten and the 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 above kindergarten and school were covered in the compulsory testing notices (CTNs) earlier, to exclude the possibility of COVID-19 infection. The kindergarten and the school had suspended teaching activities for at least five days as required for cleaning and executing the CTN.

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.