

CHP investigates two outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 15) investigating two outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URI) at a kindergarten-cum-child care centre (KG/CCC) in Kowloon City and a residential child care centre in Causeway Bay, and appealed to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

The outbreak at the KG/CCC involved eight boys and 12 girls aged 3 to 6 who have developed URI symptoms including runny nose, cough and sore throat since March 18. All of them sought medical attention. Among them, three required hospitalisation and two have been discharged upon treatment. All patients are now in stable condition.

The respiratory specimens of the three children admitted to hospital tested positive for human metapneumovirus upon laboratory testing.

The outbreak at the residential child care centre affected 15 boys and 16 girls, aged 2 months to 21 months, who have developed similar URI symptoms since April 5. All of them sought medical attention. Among them, 13 required hospitalisation and five of them were discharged following treatment. All patients have been in a stable condition. The respiratory specimens of 11 children admitted to hospital tested positive for respiratory syncytial virus upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted site visits and advised the centres to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory tract infections. The centres have been placed 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;
- 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 when sneezing or coughing, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; 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.