

Department of Health reminds parents to maintain up-to-date immunisation of children (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (May 11) reminded members of the public to maintain up-to-date immunisation for their children for comprehensive and timely protection against infectious diseases and not to delay vaccination due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

In Hong Kong, the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases under the Centre for Health Protection of the DH recommends that children from birth to Primary Six should receive different types of vaccines and boosters according to the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme (HKCIP) for the prevention of chickenpox, diphtheria, hepatitis B, measles, mumps, pertussis, poliomyelitis, pneumococcal infection, rubella, tetanus, tuberculosis and cervical cancer. The DH's Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) provide immunisation for children up to the age of 5 according to the HKCIP.

A spokesman for the DH said, "We have noticed that since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Hong Kong in the second half of January this year, some parents have not brought their children to the MCHCs for vaccination according to the recommended schedule due to worries about infection when going out.

"We strongly urge parents not to postpone their children's vaccination as immunisation is recognised as one of the most successful and cost-effective health interventions. The World Health Organization regards immunisation as a core health service that should be prioritised for the prevention of communicable diseases and safeguarded for continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, where feasible. Delays in vaccination will weaken the protection for the children against relevant infectious diseases."

The spokesman said that in view of the outbreak of COVID-19, various infection control measures have been enhanced at the MCHCs including temperature screening, requiring visitors to wear masks and advising clients to reduce the number of accompanying family members or friends when attending their appointments to reduce client flow and social contact.

Parents of preschool children who have not yet received the age-appropriate vaccines are urged to make an appointment at their registered MCHCs as soon as possible, or consult their family doctors for vaccination. Vaccination under the HKCIP at primary schools will be arranged by the DH's School Immunisation Teams at schools. Parents with children who are currently not residing in Hong Kong are advised to continue immunisation in their place of residence.

For more information on the schedule of the HKCIP, please visit

www.fhs.gov.hk/english/main_ser/child_health/child_health_recommend.html.

