

Free influenza vaccination to start tomorrow

With the launch of the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP) 2018/19 tomorrow (October 24), the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (October 23) reminded eligible persons to receive free seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves in the coming winter influenza season.

The GVP will be implemented in phases. Starting from tomorrow, the GVP will provide vaccination to the following eligible groups who are Hong Kong residents:

- Pregnant women who are Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients or Certificate for Waiver of Medical Charges (Certificate) holders can get vaccinated in Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) of the DH or Antenatal Clinics of the Hospital Authority (HA);
- Children aged 6 months to under 12 years receiving CSSA or holding the Certificate can receive vaccination in MCHCs (6 months to under 6 years) and Student Health Service Centres of the DH (6 to under 12 years). Those seeking telephone booking for eligible schoolchildren may call the Student Health Service hotline (2856 9133);
- Elderly persons aged 65 or above attending public clinics, persons who are CSSA recipients or Certificate holders aged 50 to under 65 and those aged below 50 with chronic medical problems, eligible in-patients (including paediatric patients) of the HA and eligible paediatric out-patients, and eligible persons with intellectual disabilities and community-living persons receiving Disability Allowance can receive vaccination during their follow-up or stay in public clinics/hospitals; and
- Residents of homes for the elderly and persons with disabilities, public/institutional healthcare workers, poultry workers and pig farmers can also get vaccinated accordingly.

Further to the above, community-living elderly persons aged 65 or above can get vaccinated in General Out-patient Clinics of the HA and designated Elderly Health Centres of the DH starting from November 5.

In parallel, the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS) started on October 10

to provide subsidised SIV to eligible persons. The coverage of the VSS has been extended from elderly persons aged 65 or above to Hong Kong residents aged 50 or above, further enhancing the vaccination rate of the community. The subsidy for SIV under the VSS will also be increased from \$190 to \$210 per dose for all eligible groups. Under the VSS, enrolled private doctors can provide subsidised vaccination to eligible groups in their clinics, or organise outreach vaccination activities.

The DH also introduced the School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme this year to increase the SIV uptake rate among primary school children. The pilot programme was rolled out yesterday (October 22) to reach out to 184 primary schools and provide SIV to their students through a Government Outreach Team or a Public-Private-Partnership Team.

"Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. Given that vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent influenza and its complications, all persons aged 6 months or above, except those with known contraindications, are recommended to receive SIV for personal protection. Eligible groups of both the GVP and the VSS should receive SIV before the influenza season arrives," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Meanwhile, free/subsidised pneumococcal vaccination (PV) for eligible persons will continue to be provided under the GVP and the VSS to prevent pneumococcal infections. Those aged 65 or above who do not have high-risk conditions will be eligible for one dose of 23-valent polysaccharide pneumococcal vaccination (23vPPV). Elderly persons with high-risk conditions who have not received PV before will be eligible for one dose of 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine and one dose of 23vPPV one year later.

The public, especially eligible groups, may call the CHP's hotline (2125 2125) for enquiries during office hours or visit the [vaccination schemes page](#) for more information.