

HA commences influenza vaccination programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Public hospitals and out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority (HA) will start providing seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations in phases to eligible persons tomorrow (October 24) to tie in with the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP) for 2018/19.

The HA spokesperson today (October 23) reminded members of the public that the seasonal influenza vaccination programme this year will be carried out in two phases. In the first phase, the HA will provide influenza vaccination to eligible patients of public hospitals and out-patient clinics (see the attached leaflet for details). The second phase will commence on November 5 to cover community-living elderly persons aged 65 or above.

"We will arrange influenza vaccination for our patients in the first phase in order to enhance their immunity against influenza, reducing their risk of infection during the influenza season, and thus reducing the healthcare service demand in public hospitals during the period," the spokesperson said.

"Poultry workers, pig farmers and people who are involved in poultry culling operations or the pig-slaughtering industry, as referred by relevant government departments, can also receive seasonal influenza vaccination in 22 designated General Outpatient Clinics (GOPCs) from November 12 onwards."

Eligible patients with regular follow-up at Specialist Outpatient Clinics (SOPCs) or GOPCs are advised to receive vaccination at the time of their pre-scheduled follow-up appointments within the vaccination period. Patients whose follow-up appointment date falls outside the vaccination period should enquire at the clinics for necessary arrangements.

Furthermore, the HA has also started to provide flu vaccination for staff on a voluntary basis from October 10.

"Regarding the arrangement for pneumococcal vaccination, the HA will dovetail and provide pneumococcal vaccination to eligible elderly persons under the programme," the spokesperson remarked.

"Eligible persons who wish to receive seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations should attend the out-patient clinics while bringing along relevant documents. They will receive vaccinations if assessed as clinically suitable by clinical staff."

The spokesperson stressed that both the seasonal and pneumococcal vaccines are safe. Protection from seasonal influenza vaccination will

develop in about two to four weeks after receiving and may last at least six months. It is usually well tolerated apart from occasional soreness at the injection site. Some people may have fever, muscle and joint pains and tiredness after vaccination lasting one to two days. As for the pneumococcal vaccine, protection will be generated in two to three weeks after inoculation.

"Anyone with influenza symptoms, fever or severe illness should defer the vaccination until they have recovered."

Members of the public can enquire about the details of the Government Vaccination Programme at the respective specialist clinics or GOPCs where they are attending, or make enquiries at the HA hotline 2300 6555 during office hours or visit the following website: www.ha.org.hk/goto/gvp201819/en.

The HA has already started promoting the vaccination programme through different channels, including the display of notices at prominent places of public hospitals and out-patient clinics.