

HA extends coverage of healthcare staff measles vaccination programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Central Committee on Infectious Disease and Emergency Responses of the Hospital Authority (HA) today (April 8) convened an ad hoc meeting to discuss the latest situation of measles infection, together with representatives from the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). At the meeting it was decided to extend the staff measles vaccination programme to cover staff members of Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments as well as General Out-patient Clinic triage stations.

The first phase of the staff measles vaccination programme commenced last week, with over 1 300 staff members working in high-risk departments and with inadequate immunity being vaccinated so far.

The HA Chief Manager (Infection, Emergency & Contingency), Dr Vivien Chuang, explained that due consideration has been given to the tight supply of vaccines and the infection risk assessment of staff working in different clinical settings. "The initial symptoms of measles are non-specific until the onset of rash. Infectious disease experts agreed at the meeting that the aforementioned healthcare workers have greater risk of coming into contact with measles patients during their incubation period. Vaccinating these healthcare workers helps reduce their risk of infection and further infecting other patients seeking consultation," Dr Chuang said.

Healthcare workers in these departments with inadequate immunity can make an appointment for vaccination at the Staff Clinics beginning this Wednesday (April 10).

"According to information provided by the CHP, people who were born before 1967 or have received two doses of vaccination should have adequate immunity to measles. The HA would not provide measles vaccination to these colleagues at this stage," Dr Chuang added.

Meanwhile, Dr Chuang appealed to patients of Specialist Out-patient Clinics to refrain from attending their scheduled appointments if they have fever and rash on the day. "They should call the clinics to reschedule the appointments and seek consultation in A&E Departments on possible measles infection. In addition, patients and accompanying persons should wear masks at the A&E Departments and wash their hands when leaving the hospitals."