

Hospital Authority 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 next Wednesday (October 23) to dovetail with the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP) for 2019/20.

The HA spokesperson today (October 17) 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 vaccinations to eligible patients of public hospitals and out-patient clinics (see attached leaflet for details). The second phase will commence on November 4 to cover community elders aged 65 or above.

"We will arrange influenza vaccinations for our patients in the first phase to enhance their immunity against influenza, reducing their risk of infection during the influenza season, 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 vaccinations in 22 designated General Out-patient Clinics (GOPCs) from November 11 onwards."

Eligible patients with regular follow-ups at Specialist Out-patient Clinics (SOPCs) or GOPCs are advised to receive vaccinations at the time of their 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 started to provide flu vaccinations for staff on a voluntary basis from October 9.

"Regarding the arrangement for pneumococcal vaccination, the HA would dovetail with the GVP and provide pneumococcal vaccinations to eligible elders under the programme," the spokesperson said.

"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 vaccinations will develop in about two to four weeks after reception and last for 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 the vaccination. The signs will usually subside in one to two days. As for the pneumococcal vaccine, protection will be generated in two to three weeks after inoculation.

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

Members of the public can enquire about the details of the GVP at the respective SOPCs or GOPCs where they are attending, or make enquiry on the HA hotline 2300 6555 during office hours or visit the following website: www.ha.org.hk/goto/gvp201920/en/.

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