

Secretary for Health receives seasonal influenza vaccination (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, received a seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) at the Sai Wan Ho General Out-patient Clinic today (September 28) and called on members of the public to get vaccinated early for protection in light of the influenza seasons. The Permanent Secretary for Health, Mr Thomas Chan; the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam; the Controller of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH), Dr Edwin Tsui; the Chairman of the Hospital Authority (HA), Mr Henry Fan; the Chief Executive of the HA, Dr Tony Ko, and frontline healthcare workers also echoed the move and received SIV in the same event.

Professor Lo said, "SIV is one of the most effective means for preventing seasonal influenza and its complications, effective in reducing the occurrence of influenza-related hospitalisation and death. I therefore encourage members of the public to receive SIV. Moreover, persons contracting influenza and COVID-19 at the same time may have a higher risk of developing serious illness and death. Citizens can consult healthcare personnel about getting COVID-19 vaccination in a timely manner when they receive SIV as a protection for their personal health."

Hong Kong has entered the summer influenza season and the winter influenza season is approaching. Considering the latest surveillance data of the percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for seasonal influenza viruses as well as the influenza-associated admission rate in public hospitals, local seasonal influenza activity is seen to be on a rising trend. A significant increase was also recorded in the number of outbreak of influenza-like illness at schools since the school year started in early September. People belonging to the priority groups, i.e. persons aged 50 or above (including the elderly living in residential care homes), adults aged 18 to 49 years with underlying comorbidities, persons aged 6 months or above and with immunocompromising conditions, pregnant women and healthcare workers should receive SIV as early as possible. For dual protection, those in the aforementioned groups should receive an additional COVID-19 vaccine booster in a timely manner with a dosing interval of at least six months after the last dose or recovery from COVID-19 infection (whichever is later), regardless of the number of COVID-19 vaccine doses they received. A COVID-19 vaccine can be co-administered with, or separated from, an SIV. An interval of 14 days is sufficient if people wish to space out a COVID-19 vaccine with an SIV.

The Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Subsidy Scheme 2023/24 was launched today, whereas the Government Vaccination Programme, the SIV School Outreach (Free of Charge) Programme and the Residential Care Home Vaccination Programme will begin on October 5. Members of the public may call the CHP's telephone number 2125 2125 or visit the [CHP's Vaccination Schemes page](#) for more details.

