

Special arrangement of receiving free nasal spray live attenuated influenza vaccines through Vaccination Subsidy Scheme

The Department of Health (DH) today (December 3) said that the Government had earlier announced to increase the overall supply of seasonal influenza vaccines (SIV) in view of the keen demand for SIV by members of the public and the tight supply of SIV around the world. The DH has allocated nasal spray live attenuated influenza vaccines (LAIV) to private doctors enrolled in the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS) to encourage eligible Hong Kong residents to receive vaccinations as soon as practicable to prevent seasonal influenza.

A spokesman for the DH said that Hong Kong residents aged between 2 years and 49 years who also belong to the following eligible groups of the VSS (except those who are pregnant, have low immunity or have other contraindications, and are therefore unsuitable to receive nasal spray LAIV) are eligible to receive free nasal spray LAIV from private doctors enrolled in the VSS:

- Children aged between 2 years and below 12 years, or children aged 12 years or above who are studying at a primary school in Hong Kong; or
- Persons with intellectual disabilities; or
- Persons receiving Disability Allowance; or
- Persons who are recipients of the standard rate of "100% disabled" or "requiring constant attendance" under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme.

The Government subsidy to doctors for providing vaccination services is \$100 per dose, which is the same as the subsidy per dose of influenza vaccine under the Government's other vaccination programmes/scheme. For the special arrangement of receiving free nasal spray LAIV, please visit www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/103755.html.

The spokesman said, "Children under 9 years of age who have never received any influenza vaccination before are recommended to receive two doses with a minimum interval of four weeks. Since the winter influenza season usually begins in January in Hong Kong and it takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body to provide protection against influenza virus infection, it is recommended to receive the first dose of vaccine before early December to prevent seasonal influenza."

The DH also reminds the public that influenza viruses and the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 may both spread in the coming winter influenza season. A person contracting influenza and COVID-19 at the same

time may be more seriously ill. Receiving an influenza vaccine early during 2020/21 is therefore important.

Persons eligible to receive free nasal spray LAIV should refer to the list of clinics providing such vaccination service (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/list_vssdr_gov_laiv_eng.pdf) and check with the doctor concerned about the vaccination arrangement. Details of Government's vaccination programmes/scheme, including the VSS, are available on www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/17980.html.