

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 28) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against influenza. The CHP appealed to members of the public to receive seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves during the influenza season.

The case involves a 3-year-old girl with good past health. She developed a fever since yesterday (April 27). She was taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on the same day for medical attention and was admitted to the paediatric intensive care unit. Her respiratory specimen was positive for influenza A (H1) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalopathy. She is now in serious condition.

Initial enquiries by the CHP revealed that the patient had not received SIV for this season and had no travel history during the incubation period. One of her home contacts developed relevant symptoms recently and has recovered. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. SIV is one of the most effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications, as well as reducing influenza-related hospitalisation and death. SIV is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive SIV early. As it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies, members of the public are advised to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the [CHP's website](#).

A person who gets influenza and COVID-19 at the same time may be more seriously ill and would have a higher risk of death. It is important to receive both SIV and COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible, in particular for children and elderly persons residing in the community or residential care homes. The public should also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses, and note the following:

- Surgical masks can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- For high-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised), wear a surgical mask when visiting public places. The public should also wear a surgical mask when

taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;

- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, perform physical activity regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

The public may visit the CHP's [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) for more information.

CHP investigates suspected case of paralytic shellfish poisoning

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 28) investigating a suspected case of paralytic shellfish poisoning two members of a family.

The case involves a male and a female aged 39 and 42 respectively, who presented with limb and tongue numbness, vomiting, dizziness, weakness and unsteady gait within one hour after consuming conch, scallop and common oriental clam at home yesterday (April 27). One of the patients attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Tseung Kwan O Hospital and was admitted on the same day and is in stable condition.

Initial enquiries revealed that the concerned seafood were purchased from a seafood stall in Yeung Uk Road Market in Tsuen Wan. An investigation by the CHP is continuing.

"Paralytic shellfish poisoning toxin is a natural toxin sometimes found in bivalve shellfish. It is heat-stable and cannot be destroyed through cooking," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"The symptoms of paralytic shellfish poisoning are predominantly neurological and the onset is usually within minutes to hours after ingestion of the shellfish. Initial symptoms may include tingling, numbness of the

mouth and extremities, a headache, dizziness and gastrointestinal discomfort. In the majority of cases, symptoms are resolved completely within a few days. In severe cases, difficulty in swallowing and speech, paralysis with respiratory arrest and even death may occur," the spokesman added.

The spokesman reminded members of the public that they should seek medical advice immediately if they develop shellfish poisoning symptoms, and save any leftovers for investigation and laboratory testing.

To reduce the risk of shellfish poisoning, the public should:

- Buy shellfish from reliable and licensed seafood shops;
- Remove the viscera, gonads and roe before cooking and discard any cooking liquid before consumption;
- Eat a smaller amount of shellfish in any one meal; and
- When symptoms occur after consuming shellfish, seek medical advice immediately.

Transcript of remarks by SLW

â€œFollowing is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, on fatal work accident in Sha Tin at a media session after officiating at the opening ceremony of Come Phil Festival this afternoon (April 28):

Reporter: Mr Sun, this is on industrial accidents. On the safety concerns of industrial accidents, could you have a few brief comments on that?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: We are looking into the accident in Sha Tin involving a confined space inside a sewer. Following the investigation, we will make sure we follow up strictly in accordance with legal provisions. Also, just like before, we are going to step up publicity and education efforts, to make sure that industrial safety is the first priority, not just to employers, but also to employees. We are going to take it forward through a multi-pronged approach. Thank you very much.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Construction Industry Safety Award

Scheme promotes occupational safety and health (with photos)

The Labour Department (LD) held the 24th Award Presentation Ceremony of the Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme today (April 28) to recognise principal contractors, sub-contractors, site personnel and frontline workers with good performances in the area of occupational safety and health (OSH). The scheme aims at enhancing OSH awareness and fostering a culture of safety in the construction industry.

This year's award scheme received an overwhelming response with participation from 191 construction sites. Among them, 83 sub-contractors and 131 safety teams competed for awards in two categories, namely Construction Sites and Safety Teams. A total of 30 workers were also nominated for the Safe Workers award in the course of assessment. The result of the award scheme will be uploaded onto the LD homepage later. Apart from the award presentation, a fun day was also held today to promote the message of OSH to the industry and the general public.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Commissioner for Labour, Ms May Chan, said that among the 24 fatal industrial accidents that occurred last year, 20 involved the construction industry, indicating that the industry still had the highest OSH risks. The LD will keep close tabs on the OSH standards in the construction industry, and formulate and adjust in a timely manner a multipronged approach in accordance with risk-based principles, including inspection and enforcement, publicity and promotion as well as education and training to boost the OSH culture in preventing accidents.

The ordinance in amending OSH legislation came into effect last year. With regard to extremely serious OSH contraventions, the maximum fines and imprisonment terms were increased to \$10 million and two years respectively. The penalties of various summary offences were also raised. Apart from optimising the legislation, the LD will set up Special Task Forces if necessary to conduct rigorous inspections and enforcement actions targeting construction sites accordingly to further strengthen the inspection and enforcement efforts.

Since the amendment ordinance took effect, the LD has unveiled comprehensive publicity work to enhance the promotion of the new penalties. In January this year, the LD collaborated with the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) to produce a special TV programme, namely "Both workers and employers shall abide by the law to ensure occupational safety", to disseminate the message of safeguarding OSH through a concerted effort of employers and employees. In addition, the LD organised the OSH Innovation and Technology Expo with the OSHC in March 2024 to promote the application of innovation and technology in the development of OSH. The LD also introduced the "OSH 2.0" mobile application in the same month, optimising the user interface and adding various new features to provide the latest and more comprehensive OSH information.

In terms of education and training, the LD revised the contents of several mandatory safety training courses, and the revised "Code of Practice (CoP) on Safety Management" and "CoP for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety" were gazetted in February and April this year respectively to ensure that the safety rules are in line with the latest developments of the industry. The LD also plans to launch the revised "Guidance Notes (GN) on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work" in May. The revised GN would be in tandem with the "Extremely Hot Weather" Special Alert of the Hong Kong Observatory to further assist the industry in adopting necessary heat stroke prevention measures. As well, the revised "CoP – Safety and Health at Work in Confined Spaces" is targeted to be launched in about four to five weeks.

Inaugurated in 1999, the Construction Industry Safety Award Scheme is co-organised by the LD with 16 organisations, namely the OSHC, the Development Bureau, the Hong Kong Housing Authority, the Occupational Deafness Compensation Board, the Construction Industry Council, the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board, the Hong Kong Housing Society, the Property Management Services Authority, the Hong Kong Construction Association, the Hong Kong General Building Contractors Association, the Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association, the Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors, the Minor Works Contractor Association, the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies, the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union and the Federation of Hong Kong Electrical and Mechanical Industries Trade Unions.



HKSAR Government welcomes enhancements to “exit endorsement for business visit” and “exit endorsement for talents” by Mainland authorities

â€‹The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) welcomes the announcement by the Mainland authorities today (April 28) about the extension of the period of stay for holders of an exit endorsement for business visit travelling to Hong Kong from seven days to 14 days and the expansion of application of the exit endorsement for talents to Beijing and Shanghai, both taking effect on May 6, 2024.

According to the prevailing arrangement, Mainland residents who wish to visit Hong Kong for business purpose are required to obtain an exit endorsement for business visit from the Mainland authorities. The enhancement measure has positively responded to the needs of the business sector on the Mainland and in Hong Kong by doubling the period of stay of each visit from seven days to 14 days for holders of an exit endorsement for business visit to Hong Kong. The Mainland authorities also announced that applications for the exit endorsement for business visit will be accepted nationwide and can be processed at any of the relevant offices across the country, irrespective of the applicant's place of household registration or place of residence. These measures will greatly enhance convenience for Mainland businesspersons and traders who travel to Hong Kong for various business activities and promote their exchanges with the business community in Hong Kong.

The talent exit endorsement has been implemented in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) on a pilot basis since February 20, 2023, with a view to facilitating GBA Mainland talents' travel to Hong Kong for exchanges and visits. As of mid-April 2024, more than 18 000 arrivals of holders of the talent exit endorsement in Hong Kong as visitors were recorded. Expanding application of the talent exit endorsement to Beijing and Shanghai will attract and bring more Mainland talents to Hong Kong for exchanges. The country has been actively developing high-quality talent hubs, while the HKSAR Government has been strenuously promoting the "southbound and northbound" two-way flow of talents. Against such backdrop, the enhancement measure will complement the initiative announced in the 2023 Policy Address to enable foreigners working in companies registered in Hong Kong to apply for "multipleâ€‘entry visas" valid for two or more years to the Mainland, thereby reinforcing Hong Kong's unique role as the country's international talent hub and the gateway for talents in the GBA.

Under the new measure, apart from the expansion of application to Beijing and Shanghai, other existing arrangements of the talent exit

endorsement remain unchanged. The six categories of talents (i.e. outstanding talents, scientific research talents, education talents, healthcare talents, legal talents and other talents) who meet the eligibility criteria set by the Mainland authorities can apply to the Mainland authorities for a talent exit endorsement with a validity period of five years, three years or one year. They can travel to and from Hong Kong multiple times within the validity period of the exit endorsement and stay in Hong Kong for a duration not exceeding 30 days during each visit.

Mainland residents visiting Hong Kong must hold a valid Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (EEP, commonly known as "Two-way Permit") with the relevant exit endorsement for travelling to Hong Kong. The application, approval and issuance of the EEP and exit endorsement are within the remit of the Mainland authorities. The two new measures will facilitate Hong Kong's further integration into the national development and achieve concrete results on the solid policy foundation of facilitating the "southbound and northbound" two-way flow of talents. The HKSAR Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the Mainland authorities, with a view to further promoting the connection and exchanges of talents between the Mainland and Hong Kong, and creating stronger impetus of growth for Hong Kong and the entire GBA.