



## Department of Health Community Health Partnership Communication

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### Pneumococcal infection

Pneumococcal infections are caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumococcus). There are more than 90 different strains (serotypes) of pneumococcus. Pneumococcus can be commonly found in the nose and throat of healthy people without causing infection. The bacteria can be transmitted through droplets via coughing/sneezing, direct contact with patients or indirect contact with materials soiled with respiratory secretions.

Pneumococcus can cause a wide range of diseases. More common ones include middle ear infection and lung infection. It may also cause various forms of invasive pneumococcal diseases (IPD), such as infection of the brain membranes (causing meningitis) and blood stream (causing bacteraemia and sepsis). **The infection can be serious or even life-threatening.** People who are very young or very old, or those with a weakened immune system, are particularly at risk of serious infection and complications.

Pneumococcal infection can be treated with antibiotics. However, the emergence of drug-resistant strains of pneumococci has made treatment more difficult.

Vaccination is one of the most effective means to prevent pneumococcal infection. In addition, maintaining good personal and environmental hygiene are important measures to protect against infection.

Children aged < 2	Elders aged > 65	Individuals with high-risk conditions*
<p>should follow the schedule recommended in the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme.</p> <p>Infants are advised to receive 3 doses of pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCV) in the first year of life (at 2 months, 4 months and 6 months), and another booster dose at 12 months.</p>	<p>should receive pneumococcal vaccination. They may get free or subsidized pneumococcal vaccination under the Government Vaccination Programme or Vaccination Subsidy Scheme.</p>	<p>should consult their family doctors about having pneumococcal vaccination for personal protection.</p>

*\*high risk conditions include:*

- *history of invasive pneumococcal diseases*
- *weakened immunity, such as spleen disease, cancer, HIV / AIDS, use of immunosuppressive drugs, etc.*
- *certain chronic illnesses such as heart, lung, liver and kidney diseases, diabetes mellitus or cerebrospinal fluid leakage*
- *fitted with cochlear (inner ear) implants*

### Pneumococcal infection and seasonal influenza

Influenza predisposes individuals to bacterial pneumonia. Dual vaccination with influenza vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine can lower the risk of hospitalisation and mortality among elderly.

## Eligibility Age for Elderly Health Care Voucher lowered to 65

**With effect from 1 July 2017, the eligibility age for the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme has been lowered to 65.**

Elders aged 65 or above and holding a valid Hong Kong Identity Card (HKIC) or Certificate of Exemption (CoE) issued by the Immigration Department can make use of vouchers to settle the fees of primary care services provided by healthcare service providers participating in the Scheme.

The annual voucher amount is \$2,000, with an accumulation limit of \$4,000.

Vouchers are issued and used through an electronic platform. Elders do not need to pre-register, collect or carry the vouchers. To create a voucher account and use the vouchers:

- Visit in person the participating healthcare service providers (the Scheme logo as shown at the right will be displayed at their places of practice)
- Show your valid HKIC or CoE
- Sign a consent form confirming the voucher amount to be used



Elders can use vouchers for curative, rehabilitative or preventive care services according to their health needs, including appropriate health check-up and dental services.

### Tips on Using Vouchers

Before signing the consent form on using the vouchers, elders are advised to:

- Ask the healthcare service providers to advise on the service fees
- Check the information on the consent form, including the amount of vouchers to be used

Vouchers can only be used by the eligible elder himself/herself, and **CANNOT** be used for:

- Solely purchasing products, such as medicine, spectacles, dried seafood or medical equipment
- Public healthcare services subsidised by the Government
- Inpatient services, pre-paid healthcare services and day surgery procedures (e.g. cataract surgery or endoscopy services)

**For more information:** Visit scheme website ([www.hcv.gov.hk](http://www.hcv.gov.hk)) (2838 2311)



or call enquiry hotline

## Recognition Ceremony for the “I’m So Smart” Community Health Promotion Programme 2016/17

A recognition ceremony was held on 19 May 2017 to commend organisations and community members for their active participation in promoting regular physical activities and healthy eating habits with less salt and sugar, in line with the Programme’s focus on “Diabetes” in 2016.



*The Controller of the Centre for Health Protection appealed for community partners' continuous support in the Programme.*



*Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, with healthy eating and regular exercise, not only strengthens bodily functions but also has positive impacts on mental health.*

In 2017/18, the Programme would place a focus on alcohol, promoting “alcohol-free healthy diet”; and would also incorporate the theme of “depression” to echo the theme of World Health Day 2017 “Depression - Let’s Talk”.

## World Health Day 2017 - “Depression: Let’s talk”

- Depression is a common mental health disorder and is a major cause of disability worldwide.
- Depression is characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that the individual normally enjoys, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, and lasting for at least two weeks.
- Depression could have profound effects not only on physical functions, but is also associated with increased mortality risks, particularly through suicide.

People with depression may also have other symptoms such as:

- ☐ loss of energy
- ☐ change in appetite
- ☐ sleeping more or less
- ☐ reduced concentration/ indecisiveness
- ☐ anxiety, restlessness
- ☐ feeling of worthlessness, guilt or hopelessness

- ❖ **Depression can be effectively prevented and treated. With the right help, people with depression can get better**
  - ✧ If you think you have depression, talk to someone you trust about your feelings and seek professional help
- ❖ **Staying connected, exercising regularly, and keeping up with social activities can help manage depressive symptoms**
  - ✧ Keep in contact with family and friends. Keep doing things you have always enjoyed
  - ✧ Exercise regularly
  - ✧ Stick to regular eating and sleeping habits
  - ✧ Do not drink or abuse drugs
- ❖ **Support of carers, friends and family facilitates recovery from depression**

❖ *While offering your support, remember to take good care of yourself. Relax and do things you enjoy*

Watch the motion graphic video “Know about Depression” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gmyeTYKx7M&feature=youtu.be>) produced as part of the Department of Health’s campaign on World Health Day 2017.

The video provides advice for those living with depression or caring for people with depression.

✧ *More information can be found at the thematic webpage: <http://www.chp.gov.hk/whd2017>*

## Workshops for the “I’m So Smart” Community Health Promotion Programme 2017/18

Two workshops for Healthy Cities Projects and non-government organizations were organized in April 2017.



*Speaker from Physical Fitness Association of Hong Kong, China highlighting the benefits of regular physical activity in preventing depression.*



*Putting into practice. Move for health.*

## Scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is a bacterial infection caused by Group A Streptococcus, transmitted through respiratory droplets or direct contact with infected respiratory secretions. It mostly **affects children under 10 years of age and sometimes cause outbreaks in institutions/ schools.**

The disease usually starts with a fever and sore throat. Sometimes, headache, vomiting and abdominal pain may also occur. The tongue surface may have a "strawberry"-like (red and bumpy) appearance. On the first or second day of the illness, a "sandpaper" texture-like red rash would appear over the trunk and neck, which then spreads to the limbs.

The disease may be complicated with middle ear infection, throat abscess, chest infection, meningitis, bone or joint problems, damage to kidneys, liver and heart, and rarely, the toxic shock syndrome.

**Maintaining personal and environmental hygiene is the most effective way to prevent scarlet fever.**

Keep hands clean

Avoid sharing personal items such as eating utensils and towels

Cover your nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing

**Children suffering from scarlet fever should refrain from attending school or child care setting until fever has subsided and they have been treated with antibiotics for at least 24 hours.**

If you have a fever, sore throat or skin rash, seek medical advice promptly

## For more information

Homepage / Hotline	Website / Tel
Department of Health (DH)	<a href="http://www.dh.gov.hk">www.dh.gov.hk</a>
Centre for Health Protection	<a href="http://www.chp.gov.hk">www.chp.gov.hk</a>
Central Health Education Unit	<a href="http://www.cheu.gov.hk">www.cheu.gov.hk</a>
DH 24-Hour Hotline	2833 0111

This publication is produced by Community Liaison Division (CLD) of the Department of Health.

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If you have any comments or opinions regarding the Community Health Partnership Communication, you may fax it to 2601 4209 or email to our Editorial Board at [cld@dh.gov.hk](mailto:cld@dh.gov.hk).