

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (61) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 XIV

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Dear Managers / Infection Control Officer of Residential Care Home,

Vigilance against respiratory diseases in summer

Influenza in Hong Kong usually peaks in February and March followed by a small peak in June to July. Our latest data showed small increase in influenza activity. In addition, increase of laboratory detections for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) was also observed. I would therefore like to urge your vigilance in prevention against influenza and other respiratory disease outbreaks.

In 2007, there were a total of 163 confirmed influenza outbreaks of which the majority (124) occurred in institutions and elderly homes. In 2008, as of 11 July, 18 confirmed influenza outbreaks occurred in elderly homes and 68 occurred in other institutions such as schools and kindergartens. Thirteen RSV outbreaks have been reported to the CHP so far this year. There were 30 RSV outbreaks record in 2007.

Institution and organization are collective assembly places for clients incapable of taking proper personal care and thus are at higher risk of disease outbreaks. Sources of infection could come from staff, visitors or clients (especially those just discharged from hospitals). Elderly people, young children and patients with chronic diseases are more prone to influenza/respiratory disease infection and their complications.

Influenza vaccinations aim at reducing influenza complications and deaths, among especially the elderly and those with chronic diseases. However, influenza illness may still occur and hence personal and environmental hygiene should be observed.

To prevent outbreaks, people with fever and respiratory symptoms should avoid attending institutions and affected clients should be promptly isolated. Staff with respiratory illnesses should refrain from work. The following health measures are important:

- To maintain good personal hygiene, and wash hands after sneezing, coughing;
- To maintain good ventilation;



- To build up good body immunity by having a proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, reducing stress and avoiding smoking;
- To avoid visiting crowded places with poor ventilation, especially during influenza season; and
- To wear face masks and consult doctor promptly if influenza-like symptoms develop.

If you notice any increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among your staff or clients, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477-2772; Fax: 2477-2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

Our latest disease information and guidelines are available at the CHP website: www.chp.gov.hk.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr SK CHUANG)

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