

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (6) in DH SEB CD/8/39/1  
來函檔號 Your Ref. :  
電 話 Tel. :  
傳 真 Fax No. :

10 January 2005

Dear Principal,

### Viral gastroenteritis outbreaks

I am writing to bring your attention to the prevention of viral gastroenteritis in schools.

Recently there has been an increase in institutional outbreaks of viral gastroenteritis (GE) affecting schools, child care centres, and residential care homes for the elderly.

Gastroenteritis occurs in Hong Kong all year round but those caused by viruses tend to be more common in winter months. A common cause is norovirus infection which is usually a self-limiting disease causing symptoms of nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, low-grade fever and malaise. Symptoms usually last for 24 to 48 hours. Outbreaks not uncommonly occur in institutional settings.

Strict personal, food and environmental hygiene with particular attention on handling of vomitus and faecal matter is important to prevent viral gastroenteritis outbreaks in schools:

- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food and eating and after going to toilets or handling vomitus or faecal matter.
- Wear gloves while disposing of vomitus and faeces, and wash hands afterwards.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas and items promptly and thoroughly with household bleach diluted in a ratio of 1 in 49 units of water.
- Maintain good indoor ventilation



- Make sure that food, particularly seafood and shellfish, is cooked thoroughly
- Staff and students developing vomiting or diarrhoea should refrain from school and seek medical advice.

If you notice an increase in the number of students with symptoms of viral gastroenteritis or an increase in the number of absentees, please inform the Central Notification Office of CHP as early as possible at Fax: 2477 2770 or Tel: 2477 2772. CHP will start epidemiological investigations and take appropriate control measures.

For more information, please visit the website of CHP at ([http://www.chp.gov.hk/health\\_topics.asp?lang=en&id=24&pid=9](http://www.chp.gov.hk/health_topics.asp?lang=en&id=24&pid=9)).

Yours faithfully,



(Dr Teresa LI)

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