

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (4) in DH SEB CD/8/22/1 III

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

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21 October 2011

To Principals / Persons-in-charge,

Vigilance against Hand, Foot and Mouth disease (HFMD)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of Department of Health has recorded an increase in HFMD activity recently and would like to solicit your support in prevention and control of HFMD outbreak.

The number of institutional outbreaks of HFMD recorded by the CHP has increased from 15 and 23 in August and September respectively to 25 in October (as of 20 Oct). The sentinel surveillance system based at general practitioner clinics, child care centres and kindergartens has also detected an increase in HFMD activity.

HFMD is a viral infection commonly seen in children. The infection can occur throughout the year but is more commonly found in summer months from May to July. In the past few years, a smaller winter peak of HFMD activity also occurred from October to December. The main symptoms are fever, sore throat and skin rash over the hands and feet. Although the illness is self-limiting in most cases, some cases may be caused by Enterovirus 71 (EV71) virus and may be associated with complications like myocarditis, encephalitis or poliomyelitis-like paralysis. No specific treatment is available for HFMD. Good hygiene practices are the most important measures to prevent HFMD and EV71 infection.



衛生防護中心
乃衛生署轄下
執行疾病預防
及控制的
專業架構
*The Centre for
Health Protection
is a professional
arm of the
Department of
Health for disease
prevention and
control*

To prevent HFMD outbreak and EV71 infection in your institution, following steps are recommended:

1. Maintain good communication with parents and help them to understand the need to keep children at home for rest when they develop fever or rash. Advise them to see doctor promptly if they develop symptoms suggestive of HFMD.
2. Encourage staff to screen for sick children before they enter the school. Children with HFMD should be excluded from schools until fever has subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted. (As an extra precaution, children with EV71 infection are advised not to go to school for another two weeks after all symptoms subsided, since the virus may be excreted in stool for some weeks and is associated with a higher risk of complications.)
3. Supervise children on personal hygiene practices, especially on how to wash the hands properly with liquid soap before meals and after going to toilet, cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing, and proper disposal of nasal and mouth discharge.
4. Keep the environment clean and hygienic, and follow the Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Child Care Centres, Kindergartens, and Schools which is available at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/School_full_eng_20110822.pdf

If you suspect a HFMD outbreak (e.g. two or more children in the same class develop HFMD within a period of 7 days), please inform the Central Notification Office of CHP as early as possible at Fax: 2477 2770 or Tel: 2477 2772. CHP will give advice on the management of such cases and take appropriate control measures. For more information, please visit the website of CHP at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>

We may consider advising you to suspend classes for a period of 14 days when situation warrants. Examples of such scenarios include occurrence of further cases in an institution attended by a confirmed EV71 case after stepping up control measures, OR occurrence of an EV71 case who is suffering from severe complication and the institution the child is attending has an associated HFMD outbreak.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr Christine WONG)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health