

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (237) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.20

September 21, 2016

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**Increase in Local Activity of Seasonal Influenza & Additional Measure
on Temperature Monitoring**

We would like to inform you that the local seasonal influenza activity is increasing. The percentage positive for seasonal influenza viruses increased from 7.6% in the week ending August 27 to 14.4% last week among respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). Most detections were influenza A(H3N2). The influenza-associated admission rate in public hospitals among children aged under five increased from 0.57 case per 10 000 population in the week ending August 27 to 1.17 last week, while that among the elderly aged 65 or above rose from 0.43 to 0.89. Besides, the number of school/institutional influenza-like illness outbreaks increased from six (affecting 27 persons) in the week ending September 10 to 15 (affecting 109 persons) last week. In the past four weeks, outbreaks mainly occurred in elderly homes (35%), primary schools (23%) and kindergartens/child care centres (16%).

Young children, elderly people and patients with chronic diseases are more prone to influenza infection and its complications. As schools and organisations are collective assembly places, infectious diseases such as influenza could be easily spread among people through their daily contacts. Sources of infection could come from staff, visitors or students (especially those having active symptoms).



Schools should actively check the body temperature of all students every day when they arrive at school so as to identify students with fever. This additional measure should continue until the local influenza activity

returns to the baseline level. By then, the CHP will issue another letter to inform you.

To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that children with fever (oral temperature higher than 37.5°C, or ear temperature higher than 38°C), regardless of the presence of respiratory symptom, should not be allowed to attend school. They should be advised to seek medical advice and should avoid school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided. Staff should also check their temperature before work every day and staff with respiratory illnesses or fever should refrain from work.

It is also important to measure and record students' body temperature properly. Please refer to Section 2.3 of the 'Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools / Kindergartens / Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres / Child Care Centres' published by the CHP for detailed information on monitoring of body temperature, which can be accessed at:

http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_schools_kindergartens_kindergartens_cum_child_care-centres_child_care-centres.pdf.

In addition, the following measures are advised to prevent influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub;
- Wash or clean hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, or after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and wash hands properly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Wear surgical mask and seek medical advice promptly if symptoms of respiratory tract infection or fever develop;
- Maintain good ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places when influenza is prevalent; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

If you notice an increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among your students, clients or staff, please report promptly to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477-2772; Fax: 2477-2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control. The latest information on influenza activity can be found on the following website: http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'S K Chuang', is centered on the page.

(Dr. S K Chuang)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health