

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (38) in DH SEB CD/8/39/1

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

電 話 TEL.:

傳 真 FAX No.: (852) 2711 4847

28 December 2006

Dear Doctor,

Recent increase in noroviral gastroenteritis in Japan

We would like to bring to your attention to the recent increase in gastroenteritis cases caused by norovirus in Japan.

According to the information provided by the Japanese health authority, there has been an early increase of norovirus outbreaks since October. The activity of infectious gastroenteritis in Japan also demonstrated a rising trend and the figures were the highest over the corresponding weeks in the past 10 years. Winter is usually the peak season for norovirus outbreaks in Japan.

In Hong Kong, an increase in activity was observed in the past four weeks, coincided with our usual winter season. A total of 20 outbreaks caused by norovirus affecting 204 persons were recorded so far in December as compared with 12 outbreaks affecting 102 persons in the whole November. Sentinel surveillance based at residential care homes for the elderly (RCHE) also showed elevated activity of acute diarrhoeal disease since early December.

We would like to seek your assistance in advising your staff and patients to adhere to strict personal, food and environmental hygiene while traveling or in Hong Kong. In particular,



- Wash hand thoroughly using liquid soap before handling food and eating and after going to toilet;
- Avoid consuming food that is not thoroughly cooked, especially shellfish;
- Wear gloves when disposing of vomit 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.

Staff or patients with vomiting or diarrhoea should be advised to refrain from work until 48 hours after recovery. If you notice an increase in the number of patients or staff of your hospital with symptoms of acute gastroenteritis, please inform the Central Notification Office of CHP as soon as possible via Fax: 2477 2770 or Tel:2477 2772. CHP will provide advice in the management of such cases and control measures.

For more information on norovirus, please visit the website of CHP at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr. Thomas TSANG)
Consultant Community Medicine
(Communicable Disease)
Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health