

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (62) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.21

February 22, 2017

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

Arrival of Winter Influenza Season in Hong Kong and Additional Measure on Temperature Monitoring

We would like to inform you that the local activity of seasonal influenza has continued to increase in the past few weeks, signaling that Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season. The percentage positive for seasonal influenza viruses increased gradually from 6.20 per cent in the first week of January to 9.12 per cent last week among respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). Majority of the influenza virus detected in the past four weeks were influenza A(H3N2) (86.8%).

Besides, the number of outbreaks of influenza-like illness (ILI) in institutions and schools has increased from one outbreak in the week ending February 11 to 13 outbreaks last week, affecting 95 persons in total. In the first three days of this week (February 19-21), eight ILI outbreaks affecting a total of 27 persons have already been recorded. In the above period, the outbreaks occurred in primary schools (41 per cent), kindergartens or child care centres (23 per cent), residential care homes for the elderly (23 per cent), secondary schools (9 per cent) and residential care homes for persons with disabilities (4 per cent).

Young children, elderly people and patients with chronic diseases are 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). In this regard, we would like to urge you to reinforce preventive measures in schools, kindergartens and child care centres so as to mitigate the impact of seasonal influenza.



In this influenza season, schools should actively check the body temperature of all students every day during this influenza season when they arrive at school so as to identify students with fever.

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_are_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 children/ 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.

For the latest information on influenza activity, please visit the CHP's pages below for more information:

- The influenza page (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html); and
- The weekly Flu Express report (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/2108.html).

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK Chuang)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health