

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (4) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 III

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Dear Doctor,

**Hong Kong is entering the influenza season**

Our local surveillance systems have recently detected a rising trend in influenza activity. This indicates that Hong Kong is entering the influenza season.

Laboratory surveillance has recorded an increasing number of influenza virus detections. In the week ending 2 February 2008, 79 influenza viruses were detected, as compared with an average of 32 in the past 4 weeks. Among them, 31 were influenza A (H1N1) viruses, 22 were influenza A (H3N2) viruses and 24 were influenza B viruses.

Sentinel surveillance networks have also shown increasing influenza activity. In the week ending 2 February 2008, the average consultation rates for influenza-like illness at sentinel private doctor and general outpatient clinics were 51.3 and 4.4 per 1,000 consultations respectively, as compared with an average of 45.9 and 3.7 per 1,000 consultations in the previous 4 weeks.

Our Public Health Laboratory has isolated a number of influenza viruses that have recently appeared in different countries. These include A/H3N2/Brisbane-like virus, A/H1N1/Solomon Islands-like virus, B/Yamagata-like virus and B/Malaysia-like virus.

According to serological studies by the World Health Organization, the current vaccine still offers 40 to 85 per cent of protection against the H3N2 Brisbane-like virus. At the same time, there is good match of the vaccine and circulating A/H1N1 and B/Malaysia-like strains. The B/Yamagata-like strain has been circulating in Hong Kong in recent years and some immunity is expected among local population.



Influenza is highly infectious and can cause significant morbidity among risk groups, especially elderly people living in institutions. Members of the public who are at higher risk of complications from influenza should get vaccinated as soon as possible.

You are also reminded to report respiratory illnesses occurring in institutional settings for prompt outbreak control.

For the latest information on influenza activity, please see our weekly Flu Express at the CHP website ([www.chp.gov.hk](http://www.chp.gov.hk)).

Yours faithfully,



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