



衛生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection

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24 April 2015

Employers of foreign domestic helpers

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Encourage Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccination
for foreign domestic helpers**

Measles infection is a highly infectious and severe viral infection that may affect any person who is not immune to the infection. Affected persons may develop fever and rash for one to two weeks and recover. In severe cases, middle ear, lungs and brain can get involved and lead to serious consequences or even death. Immunisation against measles is the most effective preventive measure. In Hong Kong, measles vaccine is given in combination with the mumps and rubella vaccines, named as Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine, to children at 1 year old and Primary One*. Over 95% of the locally born people in Hong Kong are immune to this infection.

However, we are aware that measles cases were increasing in neighbouring areas such as Mainland China, Japan, the Philippines and Singapore. There has also been an increase in measles infections in Hong Kong since last year (2013). You may wish to know that some of these measles patients were foreign domestic helpers. They might have contracted the illness in their home countries or locally.

Some foreign domestic helpers may not have had measles immunisation before they arrive in Hong Kong. If they get infected with measles in Hong Kong, they may pass the infection to their friends and relatives, their employers and their families, especially infants who have not yet received vaccination. To safeguard the health of your family members and prevent measles infection and



transmission in the community, we would like to enlist your help to inform your foreign domestic helper(s) of the risk of measles and advise them to get immunised if they have not done so, preferably before they arrive in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, MMR vaccination is available in most private health clinics.

Furthermore, receiving MMR vaccine can also prevent rubella and mumps infection. Rubella infection in pregnant woman may pose risk to the foetus. Please refer to the attached leaflet for more information on these three infections.



(Dr Vivian CHAN)
for Director of Health

*Department of Health incorporated the “Varicella Vaccine – First Dose” into the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme for children at one year old starting 2 July 2014. Department of Health will provide the “MMRV Vaccine (Measles, Mumps, Rubella & Varicella) - Second Dose” to Primary One children who had received the “Varicella Vaccine – First Dose” and use it in place of the “MMR Vaccine (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) – Second Dose”



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Foreign domestic workers are advised to receive measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination

The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health of Hong Kong recorded a relatively higher proportion of measles among foreign domestic workers this year. Measles infection is a highly infectious and severe viral infection that may affect any person who is not immune to the infection. Infected persons may pass the infection to their friends and relatives, their employers and their families, especially infants who have not yet received vaccination. We are aware that some foreign domestic helpers may not have had measles immunisation before they arrive in Hong Kong. Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine is a very effective vaccine to prevent measles, mumps and rubella infections. To protect themselves and others, we urge foreign domestic workers to receive MMR vaccination as soon as possible.

Measles

Measles is caused by the measles virus and spread by droplet or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. Affected persons will present initially with tiredness, fever, cough, red eyes and white spots inside the mouth. This is followed by a red blotchy skin rash 3-7 days later. The rash usually spreads from the face down to the rest of the body. In severe cases, middle ear, lungs and brain can get involved and lead to serious consequences or even death.

Mumps

Mumps is caused by the Mumps virus which affects the salivary glands and sometimes the nerve tissue. It is spread by droplet and direct contact with the saliva of an infected person. The disease is characterized by painful swelling of the salivary glands, usually at the cheek(s), and fever. Sometimes, there may be complications like deafness, or infection of the brain. Adolescents might develop infection of the testicles or ovaries, which can affect fertility.

Rubella

Rubella, also known as “German Measles”, is caused by Rubella virus. It can be transmitted by contact with secretions from nose and pharynx of infected persons through droplet spread or direct contact with patients. Symptoms are usually mild. Children usually present with fever, headache, diffuse rash and enlargement of lymph nodes behind the ears or in the neck. Sometimes there may be no symptoms at all. Complications include arthritis, thrombocytopenia and encephalitis.

Rubella infection produces anomalies in the developing fetus. Congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) is likely to occur in infants born to women who got infected during the first 3 months of pregnancy. CRS is characterised by deafness, blindness, heart malformations and mental retardation.

Prevention

MMR vaccine can effectively prevent these three diseases. In Hong Kong, children are routinely given the MMR vaccine at age one, followed by a second dose at Primary One. Over 95% of locally born people in Hong Kong have already received the vaccine. Despite the high coverage rates, persons who have not received the vaccine may still get infected as measles, mumps and rubella are highly infectious.

To prevent infection and transmission in the community, we advise foreign domestic helpers to get immunised if they have not done so, preferably before they arrive in Hong Kong. If this is not possible, they can consult family doctor after they have arrived in Hong Kong. Anybody with symptoms compatible with measles, mumps or rubella should seek medical care promptly.

For more information on MMR vaccination, please visit the Family Health Service’s website: http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health_info/child/486.html

Centre for Health Protection

Department of Health

Updated in April 2015

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