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To Foreign domestic helpers

Dear Sir/Madam,

Vaccination of foreign domestic helpers against measles

Measles is a highly infectious and severe viral infection that may affect any person who is not immune. 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 one year old and 18 months. Over 95% of the local-born people in Hong Kong are immune.

If you have not had measles immunisation before, you may get infected and pass the disease to your friends and relatives, as well as your employers and their family members, especially infants who have not yet received vaccination. To safeguard the health of yourself and your family members and prevent measles infection and transmission in the community, we would like to urge you to get immunised if you have not done so, preferably before your arrival in Hong Kong. If this is not feasible, you can consult a family doctor after you have arrived in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, MMR vaccination is available in 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.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. AU Ka-wing, Albert)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health



Foreign domestic helpers are advised to receive Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination

Measles is a highly infectious and severe viral infection that may affect any person who is not immune. Rubella may cause anomalies in the developing foetus (“congenital rubella syndrome”) if women are infected during the first three months of pregnancy. Persons infected with measles or rubella may pass the infection to their friends and relatives, their employers and their household members, especially infants who have not yet received vaccination. We are aware that some foreign domestic helpers may not have had measles and rubella immunisation in their home country before they arrive in Hong Kong. Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine to prevent measles, mumps and rubella infections. To protect themselves and others, we urge foreign domestic helpers to receive MMR vaccination.

In general, people can be considered as non-immune to measles/rubella if (i) they did not have the infection confirmed by laboratory test before, and (ii) they had not been fully vaccinated against measles/rubella, or have unknown vaccination status or unknown immunity against measles. **To prevent infection and transmission in the community, we advise all foreign domestic helpers who are non-immune to either measles or rubella to receive MMR vaccine before they arrive in Hong Kong.**

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

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 characterised by fever and painful swelling of the salivary glands (usually at the cheeks). 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 three months of pregnancy. CRS is characterised by deafness, blindness, heart malformations and mental retardation.

Centre for Health Protection

Department of Health

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