監測及流行病學處

衞生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection
保障市民健康
Protecting Hong Kong's health

Surveillance
And
Epidemiology
Branch

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (1) in DH SEB CD/8/22/1 IV
電　　話 Tel. :
傳　　真 Fax No. :

25 May 2018

Dear Doctor,

Vigilance against Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) and Enterovirus 71 (EV71) Infection

I would like to draw your attention to the recent increase in activity of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) and enterovirus 71 (EV71) infection and enlist your support in the prevention of the diseases.

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health recorded an increasing number of institutional outbreaks of HFMD in the past two weeks, from five in week 19 (ending May 12) to 14 last week. Fifteen institutional HFMD outbreaks have already been recorded in the first five days of this week. Besides, surveillance of HFMD based at sentinel private medical practitioners and sentinel child care centres/kindergartens also showed a corresponding increase of HFMD activity recently. In addition, the number of cases of EV71 infection recorded has increased from zero to one case per month during the period from January to April to seven cases in May. As of 24 May, a total of nine cases of EV71 infection were recorded in 2018.

HFMD occurs throughout the year in Hong Kong but the disease activity usually peaks between May and July. HFMD mainly affects young children and outbreaks usually occur in child care centres and kindergartens. Common aetiological agents of HFMD include coxsackieviruses, EV71 and other enteroviruses. The incubation period ranges from three to seven days. The disease is mainly transmitted by the faecal-oral route but direct contact with open and weeping skin vesicles may also spread the virus. An infected person is most contagious during the first week of illness and the virus can be found in stools for weeks. Although HFMD is usually self-limiting, some patients, especially those infected with EV71, may develop complications like myocarditis, encephalitis or poliomyelitis-like paralysis.

We would like to enlist your support in providing the following health advice to

衞生防護中心乃衞生署轄下執行疾病預防及控制的專業架構
The Centre for Health Protection is a professional arm of the Department of Health for disease prevention and control

香港九龍亞皆老街 147C 號 3 樓
3/F, 147C Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong

HFMD patients and their carers/parents:

- Children with HFMD should be refrained from nurseries/ kindergartens/ schools, social activities and swimming until all vesicles have dried up and symptoms subsided;
- Seek medical advice urgently if they develop symptoms and signs suggesting severe illness such as persistent high fever, repeated vomiting, persistent sleepiness or drowsiness, myoclonic jerks or sudden limb weakness;
- Protect other family members, especially children, from getting the infection through strict personal and environmental hygiene; and
- As EV71 is associated with higher risk of complications and the virus may be excreted in stools for some weeks, CHP advises children suffering from laboratory confirmed EV71 infections to **stay away from school for two additional weeks** after symptoms have subsided.

Please report cases of EV71 infection and severe paediatric enterovirus infection (other than EV71 and poliovirus) to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of CHP by telephone (2477 2772), by fax (2477 2770) or via the CENO On-line website (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html). For details of the reporting criteria, please refer to the CENO website at https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_DINS_ONLINE/document/downloadDocumentWithDocName?Dockey=CaseDefinition. CHP will carry out epidemiological investigations for these cases and take appropriate control measures.

The latest surveillance data on HFMD and EV71 are published in the weekly "*EV Scan*" (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/guideline1_year/29/134/441/502.html). Further information can be found from the following webpage: http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/16354.html. Please draw the attention of the healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above. Thank you for your unfailing support in prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

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