

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (42) in DH SEB CD/8/35/1 Pt.3

May 17, 2018

Person-in-charge
Employment Agencies

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccination
for Foreign Domestic Helpers**

We are writing to enlist your help to promote the use of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccines among foreign domestic helpers (FDH) for protecting them and the local community against these vaccine-preventable diseases.

Measles infection is a highly infectious and potentially severe or even fatal disease, in particular among infants and other high-risk individuals. Measles during pregnancy may increase the risk of miscarriage, preterm delivery or even stillbirth. Rubella may cause anomalies in the developing foetus (“congenital rubella syndrome”) if women are infected during the first three months of pregnancy. MMR vaccines are safe and effective to prevent both diseases as well as mumps.

Measles remains an endemic infection in many countries in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. In the first three months of 2018, confirmed measles cases continued to be reported in the Philippines (4930 cases), Indonesia (764 cases), Malaysia (755 cases) and Thailand (402 cases). Rubella is also endemic in Indonesia and the Philippines with 4327 cases and 443 cases recorded in 2017 respectively.



A review of the 60 adult measles cases reported in Hong Kong from 2013 to 2017 showed that seven of them were FDH, in which three had travel history to their home country before onset of symptoms. All of them were either unvaccinated or uncertain about their vaccination history against measles.

When non-immune FDH get infected with measles or rubella, they may pass the infection to their friends, relatives, employers and their families, especially infants aged below one year who have not yet received any MMR vaccination. To prevent measles and rubella in the community, we would like to enlist your help to inform potential employers of FDH as well as FDH who are prepared to work in Hong Kong of the risk of measles and rubella and advise non-immune FDH to get vaccinated, preferably before they arrive in Hong Kong. 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. All FDH who are non-immune to *either* measles or rubella should receive MMR vaccine.

We are aware that some employment agencies may arrange pre-employment medical check-up for FDH. If your agency is also offering this service, we would be most grateful if you could consider assessing the immune status against measles/rubella of FDH or providing MMR vaccination as items in the medical check-up package. MMR vaccines (or other combination vaccines which also contain varicella component to prevent chickenpox infection) are available in private clinics in Hong Kong.

Please distribute the attached 2-page information sheet on MMR vaccination to all potential employers for their information, e.g. making it a routine information sheet to be included in the information pack prepared by your company for employers. Additionally, pamphlets on measles are also enclosed. You may wish to put it in your office for your customers. If you would like to request more copies, you can complete the online request form at <https://www2.chp.gov.hk/eform/Notice.aspx?LANG=EN>.

Thank you for your assistance. We hope that you will join us as partners to step up our efforts towards protecting people of all ages in the community by promoting immunisation.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. WONG Miu-ling)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

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

Measles infection is a highly infectious and severe viral infection that may affect any person who is not immune to the infection. Rubella may cause anomalies in the developing foetus (“congenital rubella syndrome”) if women are infected during the first three months of pregnancy. 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 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. **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, preferably before they arrive in Hong Kong. If this is not possible, they can consult a doctor after they have arrived in Hong Kong.** MMR vaccines (or other combination vaccines which also contain varicella component to prevent chickenpox infection) are available in private clinics 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 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 three months of pregnancy. CRS is characterised by deafness, blindness, heart malformations and mental retardation.

Centre for Health Protection

Department of Health

May 2018