

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (69) in DH SEB CD/8/22/1 II

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28 October, 2010

To Principals / Persons-in-charge,

Vigilance against Hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) would like to remind you to stay vigilant against HFMD outbreaks in your institution.

In the past three years, a small winter peak of HFMD activity also occurred from October to December. This year, we have recorded an increasing trend of HFMD outbreaks since September as school term began. A total of 81 cases were recorded in September 2010. That is much higher than the corresponding monthly number in year 2008 and 2009 which recorded only 2 and 5 cases respectively. More than 20 outbreak cases per week were recorded by CHP since October this year. Sentinel surveillance systems of general practitioner clinics and child care centres/kindergartens also showed sustained rise of HFMD activity.

Although the illness is self-limiting in most cases, some cases can be caused by EV71 virus and can be associated with complications like myocarditis, encephalitis or poliomyelitis-like paralysis. No specific treatment is available for HFMD. Good hygiene practices are crucial to prevent HFMD outbreak.

To prevent HFMD outbreak in your institution, the following measures should be implemented:



1. Maintain good communication with parents and help them to understand the need to keep children at home for rest when they develop fever or rash. Advise them to see doctor promptly if they develop symptoms suggestive of HFMD.
2. Encourage staff to screen for sick children before they enter the school. Children with HFMD should be excluded from schools until fever has subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted. (As an extra precaution, children with EV71 infection are advised not to go to school for another two weeks after all symptoms subsided, since the virus may be excreted in stool for some weeks and is associated with a higher risk of complications.)
3. Supervise children on personal hygiene practices, especially on how to wash the hands properly with liquid soap before meals and after going to toilet, cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing, and proper disposal of nasal and mouth discharge.
4. Avoid high risk toys such as ballpools. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surface, furniture and toilets regularly with diluted bleach of 1:99 concentration (mixing 1 part of 5.25% household bleach with 99 parts of water). Disinfect toys/places which are contaminated by secretions or excreta with diluted household bleach of 1:49 concentration.
5. Remind staff to wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water after changing diapers for each child, to disinfect diaper-change area by diluted bleach, and to dispose soiled diapers properly.
6. Keep the environment clean and hygienic, and follow the Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Child Care Centres, Kindergartens, and Schools which is available at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/School_full_eng_20090115.pdf
7. Last but not least, please also incorporate in your health education to children that, when they are having holidays outside Hong Kong, they should also remember to keep their hands clean and avoid touching vesicles on hands of other sick children.

If you suspect a HFMD outbreak (e.g. two or more children in the same class develop HFMD within a period of 7 days), please inform the Central Notification Office of CHP as early as possible at Fax: 2477 2770 or Tel: 2477 2772. CHP will give advice on the management of such cases and take appropriate control measures. For more information, please visit the website of CHP at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>

Yours sincerely,



(Dr SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health