



衛生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection

Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases

**Recommendations on Seasonal Influenza Vaccination
for the 2022-23 Season in Hong Kong
(As of 21 October 2022)**

On 25 April 2022, the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) provided recommendations in relation to seasonal influenza vaccination in Hong Kong for the 2022-23 season. Recommended priority groups for seasonal influenza vaccination included:

- (a) Health care workers
- (b) Persons aged 50 years or above
- (c) Pregnant women
- (d) Residents of residential care homes
- (e) Persons with chronic medical problems
- (f) Children aged six months to 11 years
- (g) Poultry workers
- (h) Pig farmers and pig-slaughtering industry personnel

2. Subsequent to the issue of the April 2022 recommendation, the latest WHO position paper published in May 2022 stated that vaccination of children could reduce the number with influenza or influenza-like illness and may reduce community transmission. The WHO remarked that data from studies in high- and middle-income settings show that the greatest impact on community transmission is



achieved by vaccination of children, particularly those of school age.¹

3. The SCVDP also noted the UK recommendation updated in September 2022 prioritized secondary students to undergo influenza vaccination if funding were available, given the uncertainty of seasonal influenza activity in 2022/23. The aim of such recommendation is to protect the most vulnerable and alleviate potential pressure on the healthcare system during the influenza season when influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory pathogens might be co-circulating.²

4. SCVDP noted a systematic review of students targeting children aged between 3 and 16 years which showed influenza vaccination could reduce influenza and might reduce influenza like illnesses.³ Local study also revealed that school outreach influenza vaccination program significantly increased vaccination coverage rates with a 1% increase associated with a reduction of 4.3 influenza-related hospital admissions of school-aged children. The study concluded, among others, that extension of vaccination program should be considered in secondary schools to increase the coverage rates in adolescents.⁴

5. Taking reference from the aforesaid WHO recommendation, overseas practice as well as local context, the SCVDP further recommends secondary school students as another priority group for this season's seasonal influenza vaccination to prevent possible school outbreaks and community transmission.

6. The aforesaid recommendation provides an update on previous recommendations regarding the use of influenza vaccine dated 25 April 2022.

October 2022

¹ World Health Organization (WHO), Vaccines against influenza: WHO position paper. 13 May 2022. Available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-wer9719>

² The United Kingdom Health Security Agency, The Government of the United Kingdom: The green book, Chapter 19: Influenza. 21 September 2022. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19>

³ Jefferson T, Rivetti A, Di Pietrantonj C, Demicheli V. Vaccines for preventing influenza in healthy children. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 2018;2(2):CD004879. Available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6491174/pdf/CD004879.pdf>

⁴ Wong WH-S, Peare S, Lam HY, Chow CB, Lau YL. The estimated age-group specific influenza vaccine coverage rates in Hong Kong and the impact of the school outreach vaccination program. *Hum Vaccin Immunother.* 2022;18(1):1-5. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21645515.2021.1989916>

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