



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局

Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref.: EDB(SDCT)3/PRO/10/1/1(4)

電話 Telephone:

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傳真 Fax Line:

11 January 2019

To: Supervisors/Principals of All Schools

Dear Supervisor/Principal,

**Alert on Further Increase in Seasonal Influenza Activity in Hong Kong and
Guidelines on Proper Hand Hygiene and Proper Use of Mask**

According to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), the local seasonal influenza activity has continued to increase in the past week and young children aged below six years were particularly affected in this season. A copy of the letter issued by the CHP is enclosed at the Appendix for your reference.

In view of the latest development of the communicable disease, we would like to urge schools to put in place CHP's advice and reinforce preventive measures including the additional measure on temperature monitoring, receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible, proper hand hygiene and proper use of mask, etc., so as to mitigate the impact of seasonal influenza. Please also advise parents to take notice of the health conditions of their children. Children with fever should be advised to seek medical advice and should avoid school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided.

Prompt reporting of suspected outbreak cases of communicable diseases

If a suspected outbreak of communicable disease occurs in school or there is an increasing trend or unusual situation in the number of persons taking sick leave with similar

symptoms or due to the same infectious disease (for example, three or more students in the same class develop symptoms of respiratory tract infections within a short time), schools should report the case to the Central Notification Office of CHP immediately (Fax No.: 2477 2770; Tel No.: 2477 2772) by completing the "Suspected Infectious Disease Outbreak in School/ Kindergarten / KG-cum-CCC/ Child Care Centre Notification Form" to facilitate CHP's early epidemiological investigation and outbreak control. Schools should also forward a copy of the Notification Form to their respective Regional Education Offices (REO)/ Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres (JOKC).

In addition, for more effective prevention against the spread of communicable diseases in the campus, schools should assign designated staff or a crisis management team to coordinate and oversee matters relating to the hygienic conditions of the school environment and to brief students/staff and parents on the relevant preventive measures.

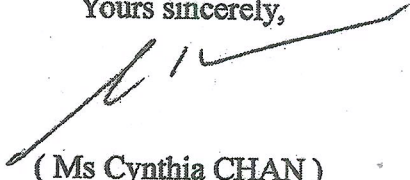
Observing guidelines in handling class suspension matters

When schools consider school-based class suspension on the ground of outbreak of communicable disease according to EDBC No. 9/2015 "Handling Emergency Situations in Schools", they are required to consult the officer of CHP and confirm the situation with the respective REO/ JOKC before arriving at any decision. Taking into consideration the situation at the time, including the number of children affected, severely ill or hospitalized, the progression of the outbreak and the effectiveness of control measures, CHP would advise schools whether class suspension is needed. Schools should maintain close contact with CHP and this Bureau in this respect so that appropriate advice and support could be rendered.

We will continue to keep in close contact with the CHP and release the latest information on communicable diseases to schools.

For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officers/Senior Services Officers.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Cynthia CHAN)
for Secretary for Education

監測及流行病學處



Surveillance
And
Epidemiology
Branch

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (155) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.22

January 11, 2019

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**Alert on Further Increase in Seasonal Influenza Activity in Hong Kong and
Guidelines on Proper Hand Hygiene and Proper Use of Mask**

I refer to our previous letter dated January 2, 2019, and would like to update you on the latest activity of seasonal influenza. Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season in early January 2019 and the local seasonal influenza activity has continued to increase in the past week. The community should heighten vigilance for protection against influenza.

Among the respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), the percentage tested positive for influenza viruses rose from 14.46% in the week ending December 29, 2018 to 19.67% in that ending January 5, 2019. The circulating influenza viruses were predominantly influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (82% of all positive influenza detections).

Young children aged below six years were particularly affected in this season, as reflected by the high number of outbreaks in kindergartens/child care centres and hospitalisation rate among children aged below six years. The weekly number of institutional influenza-like illness (ILI) outbreaks reported to the CHP has sharply increased from six in the week ending January 5 to 96 in the first five days of this week (as of January 10). These 102 outbreaks affected a total of 533 persons. They occurred in 68 kindergartens/child care centres, 20 primary schools, two secondary schools, three residential care homes for the elderly, three residential care homes for the disabled, three hospitals and three other institutions.



衛生防護中心乃衛生署
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

We anticipate that the local seasonal influenza activity will continue to rise in the coming weeks and remain at an elevated level for some time. Members of the public should maintain good personal protection against influenza.

Particularly, children, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses are urged to receive influenza vaccination as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination. They should promptly seek medical advice if influenza-like symptoms develop so that appropriate treatment can be initiated as early as possible to prevent potential complications.

Young children, elderly people and patients with chronic diseases are prone to influenza infection and its complications. As schools and organisations are collective assembly places, infectious diseases such as influenza could be easily spread among people through their daily contacts. Sources of infection could come from staff, visitors or students (especially those having active symptoms). In this regard, we would like to urge you to reinforce preventive measures in schools, kindergartens and child care centres so as to mitigate the impact of seasonal influenza.

Schools should actively check the body temperature of all students every day during this influenza season when they arrive at school so as to identify students with fever. This additional measure should continue until the local influenza activity returns to the baseline level. By then, the CHP will issue another letter to inform you.

To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that children with fever (oral temperature higher than 37.5°C, or ear temperature higher than 38°C), regardless of the presence of respiratory symptoms, should not be allowed to attend school. They should be advised to seek medical advice and should avoid school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided. Staff should also check their temperature before work every day and staff with respiratory illnesses or fever should refrain from work.

It is also important to measure and record students' body temperature properly. Please refer to Section 2.3 of the 'Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools / Kindergartens / Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres / Child Care Centres' published by the CHP for detailed information on monitoring of body temperature, which can be accessed at:
http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_schools_kindergartens_kindergartens_cum_child_care-centres_child_are_centres.pdf

Moreover, we would like to draw your attention to our guidelines on proper hand hygiene and proper use of mask available from the CHP's designated

webpages (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/460/19728.html> and <https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/460/19731.html> respectively). Please refer to Appendices I and II for the detailed recommendations on proper hand hygiene and proper use of mask respectively. Please draw the attention of the staff and students in your institution to the above.

Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the following measures are advised to prevent influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When influenza is prevalent, avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

If you notice an increase in fever/respiratory illnesses among children/students, clients or staff, please report promptly to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for prompt epidemiological investigations and outbreak control. For the latest information on influenza activity, please visit the CHP's pages below for more information:

- The influenza page (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html); and
- The weekly Flu Express report (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/29/304.html>).

Yours faithfully,



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

Perform Hand Hygiene Properly

Many infectious diseases can be transmitted through direct contact. If hands are contaminated with pathogens, especially when they are soiled with respiratory discharge or faecal matters, diseases include dysentery, cholera, hepatitis, influenza, and hand, foot and mouth disease can be spread easily. Observance of hand hygiene is the prerequisite of the prevention of the spread of communicable diseases. Using soap and water or rub hands with alcohol-based handrub can achieve hand hygiene.

When do we perform Hand Hygiene?

1. Before touching the eyes, nose and mouth;
2. Before eating or handling food;
3. After using the toilet;
4. When hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions, e.g. after coughing or sneezing;
5. After touching public installations or equipment, such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs;
6. After handling vomitus or faecal matter, e.g. after changing diaper;
7. Before and after visiting hospitals, residential care homes or caring for the sick;
8. After making contact with animals, poultry or their droppings.

How to select appropriate agents for hand hygiene?

In general, we should wash hands with soap and water when hands are visibly dirty or visible soiled with blood, body fluid, after using the toilet or changing the diapers. When hands are not visibly soiled, 70-80% alcohol-based handrub is also an effective alternative. According to World Health Organization's recommendation, most alcohol-based handrubs contain either ethanol, isopropanol or n-propanol, or a combination of two of these products. Always check the expiry date before purchasing and using alcohol-based handrub.

Steps for Hand Hygiene

a) Hand hygiene with soap and water:

1. Wet hands under running water.
2. Apply liquid soap and rub hands together to make a soapy lather.
3. Away from the running water, rub hands in accordance with the 7 steps of hand hygiene technique for at least 20 seconds (refer to point c for detail). Do not rinse off soap while rubbing.
4. Rinse hands thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry hands thoroughly with either a clean cotton towel, a paper towel, or a hand dryer.
6. The cleaned hands should not touch the water tap directly again. For example: using a paper towel to wrap the faucet before turn it off.

b) Hand hygiene with alcohol-based handrub

Apply a palmful of alcohol-based handrub enough to cover all surfaces of the hands. Rub hands in accordance with the 7 steps of hand hygiene technique for at least 20 seconds until the hands are dry (refer to point c for detail).

c) Hand hygiene technique

Proper hand hygiene technique should follow the 7 steps and rub hands for at least 20 seconds.



For video demonstration

Please visit the Centre for Health Protection website at

<http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/32975.html>

Centre for Health Protection

Last update : July 2017

Infection Control Branch, Centre for Health Protection

Use Mask Properly

Face mask provides a physical barrier to fluids and large particle droplets. Surgical mask is a type of face mask commonly used. When used properly, masks can prevent infections transmitted by respiratory droplets.

People should wear a mask when they have respiratory infection ; need to care person with respiratory infection; or when visiting clinics or hospitals during pandemic or peak season for influenza in order to reduce the risk of infection spread.

Points to note on wearing a surgical mask:

- Choose the appropriate mask size. Child size is available for selection as indicated.
- Perform hand hygiene before putting on a mask.
- The mask should fit snugly over the face :
 - The coloured side of the mask face outwards with the metallic strip uppermost. For those masks without a coloured side, the side with folds facing downwards on the outside, and with the metallic clip uppermost (Image 1).
 - For tie-on surgical mask, secure upper tie at the crown of head. Then secure lower tie at the nape (Image 2). For ear-loops type, position the elastic bands around both ears.
 - Extend the mask to fully cover mouth, nose and chin (Image 3).
 - Mould the metallic strip over nose bridge and mask should fit snugly over the face (Image 4).
- Avoid touching the mask after wearing. Otherwise, should perform hand hygiene before and after touching the mask.
- When taking off tie-on surgical mask, unfasten the tie at the nape first; then unfasten the tie at the crown of head (Image 5). For ear-loops type, hold both the ear loop and take-off gently from face. Avoid touching the outside of face mask during taking-off as it may be covered with germs.
- After taking off the surgical mask, discard in a lidded rubbish bin and perform hand hygiene.
- Change surgical mask at least daily. Replace the mask immediately if it is damaged or soiled.

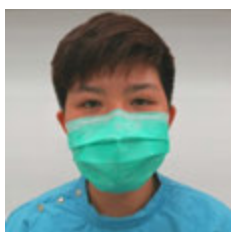


Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

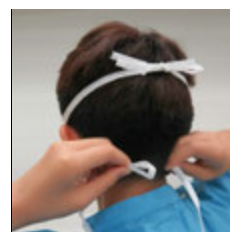


Image 5

Centre for Health Protection

July 2015

(Last updated on 28 November 2017)

咳嗽要講禮

Maintain Cough Manner

