

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (63) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.19

4 February, 2013

Dear Principal / Person in charge,

### **Hong Kong Enters Influenza Season**

According to the most recent surveillance data of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, it showed that there was an increase in influenza activity in Hong Kong, signaling the arrival of winter influenza season. In the past few weeks, there were increases in the number of influenza isolates detected by our Public Health Laboratory Centre and the consultation rates for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general out-patient clinics and sentinel private doctors. Besides, the number of ILI outbreaks occurring in institutions/schools also increased from zero in the week ending 5 January, 2013 to 8 in the week ending 2 February, 2013. The circulating influenza viruses include influenza A(H1N1)2009 (55%), followed by influenza A(H3N2) (42%) and influenza B (3%). So far, the viruses circulating in this season remain well-matched with the vaccine viruses for the 2012/13 season. Hence, vaccination remains the best protection against influenza.

Young children, elderly people and patients with chronic diseases are more prone to influenza infection and its complications. As kindergartens and schools are collective assembly places and young children are incapable of taking proper personal care, infectious diseases like influenza could be easily spread among people through their daily contact.

To prevent outbreaks of influenza or other respiratory infections, children with fever and respiratory symptoms are strongly advised not to attend school till 48 hours after fever has subsided. Staff with respiratory illnesses who are suspected to be epidemiologically linked to an outbreak should refrain from work.



In addition, the following measures are advised to prevent influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- To build up good body immunity by having a proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, reducing stress and avoiding smoking;
- To maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- To keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- To cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- To wash hands after sneezing, coughing or cleaning the nose;
- To maintain good ventilation;
- To avoid visiting crowded places with poor ventilation, especially during influenza season; and
- To wear surgical mask and seek medical advice promptly if symptoms of respiratory tract infection or fever develop.

If you notice an increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among children or staff in your institution, please report promptly to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control. For the latest information on influenza activity, please visit the website of the Centre for Health Protection ([www.chp.gov.hk](http://www.chp.gov.hk)).

Yours faithfully,



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