

Vigilance against seasonal RSV urged

A spokesman for the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 31) urged members of the public, in particular parents and management of schools and institutions to take stringent infection control measures against respiratory tract infection caused by Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

The spokesman said that RSV activity usually starts to increase between March and April and will last till August.

He said during the week ending March 22 there were 60 viral detections by the Public Health Laboratory Centre while the baseline RSV detection is less than 20 per week.

So far this year, two RSV outbreaks have been reported to the CHP. There were 13 and 30 RSV outbreaks recorded in 2006 and 2007. The situation this year is similar to previous years.

"RSV is a common cause of respiratory tract infection. It usually affects elderly people and young children at the age of five or below," the spokesman said.

The disease is spread by direct contact with infectious secretions and can be easily transmitted among individuals in institutional settings.

"The incubation period is one to 10 days and is usually five to seven days. Common symptoms include fever, chills, headache and decreased appetite," he noted.

To prevent respiratory tract infection caused by RSV, members of the public are advised to take the following measures:

- * Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- * Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- * Wash hands when they are contaminated by respiratory secretions;
- * Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- * Infected persons should avoid contact with children or those with low body resistance.

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