

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (89) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.19

December 31, 2014

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

Hong Kong Enters Winter Influenza Season

We would like to inform you that the local activity of seasonal influenza has continued to increase in the past few weeks, signaling the arrival of the winter influenza season. The percentage positive for seasonal influenza viruses among respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch rose from 3.46 per cent in the week ending December 20 to 8.37 per cent in that ending December 27, as compared to 1.76 per cent earlier in that ending December 6. The number of institutional influenza-like illness outbreaks recorded has increased to 21 in December affecting a total of 109 persons, as compared with 10 outbreaks recorded in November, affecting a total of 55 persons. The major circulating influenza viruses among positive influenza virus detections for the last two weeks were A(H3N2).

Young children, elderly people and patients with chronic diseases are more prone to influenza infection and its complications. As institutions and organizations 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).

To prevent outbreaks of influenza or other respiratory infections, students with fever and respiratory symptoms are strongly advised not to attend school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided. Staff with respiratory illnesses who are suspected to be epidemiologically linked to an outbreak should refrain from work. You may wish to note that the CHP has issued guidelines to school on prevention of communicable diseases 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.

In addition, the following measures are advised to prevent influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- To get influenza vaccination promptly for personal protection. Vaccination is one of the effective means to prevent influenza, its complications and associated hospitalisations and deaths;
- 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 students 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 CHP (www.chp.gov.hk).

Yours faithfully,



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