

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (42) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.20

January 28, 2016

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**Hong Kong is Entering 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 that Hong Kong is entering the winter influenza season. The percentage positive for seasonal influenza viruses increased from 5.85 per cent in the week ending January 16 to 7.29 per cent last week among respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). Among the influenza virus detections last week, 67 per cent were A(H1N1)pdm09, 23 per cent were B and 5 per cent were A(H3N2). Besides, nine ILI outbreaks in institutions/schools were recorded each in last week (affecting 63 persons) and this week (56 persons) as of yesterday (January 27). In the past four weeks, outbreaks mainly occurred in primary schools (60 per cent) and kindergartens or child care centres (30 per cent).

Young children, elderly people and patients with chronic diseases are more 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).

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 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 schools on prevention of communicable diseases which can be accessed at:



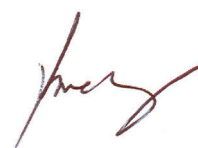
In addition, the following measures are advised to prevent influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub;
- Wash or clean hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, or after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and wash hands properly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Wear surgical mask and seek medical advice promptly if symptoms of respiratory tract infection or fever develop;
- Maintain good ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places when influenza is prevalent; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

If you notice an increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among children or staff in your institution / school, 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 CHP's pages below for more information:

- The influenza page ([http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view\\_content/14843.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html)); and
- The weekly Flu Express report ([http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view\\_content/2108.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/2108.html)).

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK Chuang)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
Department of Health