

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (204) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.21

July 17, 2017

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**Alert on Sharp Increase in Activity of Seasonal Influenza**

I would like to update you on the latest influenza situation and remind you of heightened vigilance amid the marked increase in activity of seasonal influenza in Hong Kong recently.

Hong Kong has entered the summer influenza season in mid-May. Our latest surveillance data show that the local seasonal influenza activity has been increasing markedly in the past two weeks and has reached a very high level. We foresee that the influenza activity will remain at a high level in the coming weeks. We strongly urge the public, particularly children, the elderly and chronic disease patients, to observe strict personal, hand and environmental hygiene for better personal protection against the seasonal influenza.

The positive percentage of seasonal influenza viruses among respiratory specimens received by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s Public Health Laboratory Services Branch increased from 31.48% to 35.66% from the week of June 25 to that of July 2 (20.76% in the week of June 18). Most detections between June 18 and July 8 were influenza A(H3N2) (91.3%), followed by influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (5.0%).

The number of institutional outbreaks of influenza-like illness (ILI) increased from 30 (affecting 210 persons) in the week of June 18 to a range of 41 and 44 (affecting 221 - 236 persons) per week in the past three weeks. In the past three weeks, most outbreaks (52.0%) were reported by residential care homes for the elderly, followed by child care centres/ kindergartens (22.8%), primary schools (11.8%), secondary schools (2.4%), residential care homes for the disabled (2.4%),



and other institutions (8.7%) .

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 when they arrive at school so as to identify students with fever.***

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 symptom, 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\\_care\\_centres.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_schools_kindergartens_kindergartens_cum_child_care-centres_child_care_centres.pdf)

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 as an effective alternative;
- 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/ students, clients or staff, 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