

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (163) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.22

January 24, 2019

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**Alert on Continuous Increase in Seasonal Influenza Activity
in Hong Kong**

I refer to our previous letter dated January 18, 2019, and would like to update you on the latest activity of seasonal influenza. Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season in early January 2019 and the local seasonal influenza activity has continued to increase in the past three weeks. We anticipate that the influenza activity will remain at an elevated level for some time. The community should heighten vigilance for protection against influenza.

Among the respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), the percentage tested positive for influenza viruses rose from 25.29% in the week ending January 12 to 29.69% in that ending January 19. The circulating influenza viruses were predominantly influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (85% of all positive influenza detections).

Young children aged below six years were particularly affected in this season, as reflected by the high number of outbreaks in kindergartens/child care centres and hospitalisation rate among children aged below six years. The weekly number of institutional influenza-like illness (ILI) outbreaks reported to the CHP from kindergartens/child care centres (KG/CCC) has sharply increased from 87 in the week ending January 12 to 153 in the week ending January 19, while 144 outbreaks have been recorded in the first four days of this week (as of January 23). ILI outbreaks were also reported from primary schools and residential care homes for the elderly (RCHes) but the numbers were comparable with the previous years.



The Government has convened an interdepartmental meeting today. After considering a basket of factors including the latest surveillance figures and trend,

the demand pressure of healthcare services provided by public hospitals, the concern of the society and parents as well as the approaching of the Chinese New Year, the Government decided that all KG/CCC will start their Chinese New Year holidays early on January 26 and will remain on holiday until the end of their originally scheduled Chinese New Year holidays. It is expected that this additional alleviating measure in relation to KG/CCC could reduce the chance of transmission of influenza among children in school settings as well as the risk of acquiring influenza infection, and also indirectly relieve the demand pressure of healthcare services provided by public hospitals.

We anticipate that the local seasonal influenza activity will remain at an elevated level in the period ahead. Members of the public should continue to maintain good personal protection against influenza. Particularly, children, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses are urged to receive influenza vaccination as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination. They should promptly seek medical advice if influenza-like symptoms develop so that appropriate treatment can be initiated as early as possible to prevent potential complications.

Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the following measures are advised to prevent influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When influenza is prevalent, avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

If you notice an increase in fever/respiratory illnesses among children/students, clients or staff, please report promptly to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772 or Fax: 2477 2770) for prompt epidemiological investigations

and outbreak control. The revised reporting form is attached.

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); and
- The weekly Flu Express report (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/29/304.html>).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'SK CHUANG', is centered on the page.

(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

**Suspected Infectious Disease Outbreak in
School / Kindergarten /KG-cum CCC /Child Care Centre
NOTIFICATION FORM**

To: Central Notification Office (CENO), Centre for Health Protection (Fax: 2477 2770)

Type of organization: (Please tick one)	<input type="checkbox"/> School*	<input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten*
	<input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten-cum-child care centre†	<input type="checkbox"/> Child care centre ‡
Name of organization	(Code no.: _____)	
Address:	_____	
Contact person:	_____ (Post: _____)	Fax: _____
Tel (office hours):	_____	Tel (outside office hours): _____
Total no. of students/children:	_____	Total no. of staff: _____
No. of sick students/children:	_____	(No. admitted into hospital : _____)
No. of sick staff:	_____	(No. admitted into hospital : _____)
Common symptoms: (May tick multiple)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fever <input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Runny nose <input type="checkbox"/> Diarrhoea <input type="checkbox"/> Vomiting <input type="checkbox"/> Skin rash <input type="checkbox"/> Blisters on hand/foot <input type="checkbox"/> Oral ulcers <input type="checkbox"/> Others (Please specify: _____)	
Suspected disease:	_____	
Reported by:	_____	Contact tel.: _____
Signature:	_____	Date of fax: _____(dd/mm/yyyy)

* **School / KG** - fax copy to **School Development Section** of Education Bureau in their respective districts

† **KG-cum-CCC** - fax copy to **Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres** of Education Bureau
(Fax: 3107 2180)

‡ **CCC** - fax copy to **Child Care Centres Advisory Inspectorate** of Social Welfare Department (Fax: 2591 9113)