

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (81) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.19

January 6, 2014

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

Vigilance against Seasonal Influenza

We would like to inform you that our latest surveillance data showed that the local activity of seasonal influenza has increased in the past few weeks. The weekly number of influenza detections reported by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has increased from 65 in week ending December 7, 2013 to 245 in the week ending January 4, 2014. There were also 13 school/institutional influenza-like illness outbreaks recorded in December of 2013, affecting a total of 86 persons. The current circulating influenza viruses for the past one week included influenza A(H3N2) (50.6%), influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (30.2%) and influenza B (18.8%).

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 like influenza could be easily spread among people through their daily contact. Sources of infection could come from staff, visitors or clients (especially those just discharged from hospitals).

In Hong Kong, the seasonal influenza activity usually exhibits two peaks, occurring between January and March, and July to August. 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 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



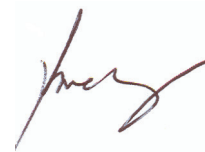
http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_schools_kindergartens_kindergartens_cum_child_care-centres_child_are_centres.pdf.

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

- 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 children 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