

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (5) in DH SEB CD/8/50/1

9 June 2011

Dear Principals / Persons-in-charge / Teacher,

### **Prevention of Scarlet Fever**

There has been an increase in the number of scarlet fever (SF) cases reported to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) since April 2011. In 2011 (up to 8 June), 337 cases have been reported, which exceeded the annual number of cases recorded in the past 10 years. Their age ranged from 1 month to 31 years (median: 6 years). So far, four institutional outbreaks were recorded in 2011 (up to 8 June), with 2 occurring in kindergartens/child care centres, one in a primary school and one in a special child care centre. A total of 16 persons were affected. In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to the prevention and control of SF in your school.

Scarlet fever is a contagious disease caused by bacteria. Patients usually acquire the infection through either respiratory route or direct contact with infected respiratory secretions. Children between 2 to 8 years of age are most often affected. It usually presents as fever, sore throat and rash. The rash appears on the first or second day of illness over trunk and neck. Then it spreads to the limbs especially on axilla, elbow and groin. Typically scarlet fever rash does not involve the face. The rash is characterized by a "sandpaper" texture. It subsides after one week and is followed by skin peeling over palms and soles. Scarlet fever is sometimes complicated with middle ear infection and kidney disease. SF can effectively be treated by appropriate antibiotics. People suspected to have SF should consult doctors immediately.

For prevention of SF, the following measures are recommended:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, e.g., after sneezing;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal



- and mouth discharge properly;
- Keep good ventilation;
  - Patients suffering from scarlet fever should not go to the institution/organization until they fully recover.

If you notice an increase in the number of your students and staff with symptoms of SF, please inform the Central Notification Office of CHP as early as possible at Fax: 2477 2770 or Tel: 2477 2772. CHP will give advice on the management of such cases and take appropriate control measures. For more information, please visit the website of CHP at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. S K CHUANG)

For Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
Department of Health