

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (6) in DH SEB CD/8/50/1 Pt. 2

18 December 2012

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

High Scarlet Fever Activity

Further to the letter dated 14 November 2012, I would like to update you on the latest local situation of scarlet fever (SF). The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has observed an increase in SF activity in Hong Kong. The number of SF cases has increased gradually from 36 in September, to 66 in October and 134 in November. In December (as of 14 December), 53 cases were recorded by CHP. In addition, there have been 31 institutional outbreaks so far in 2012, involving 22 kindergartens/child care centres and 9 primary schools. A total of 69 persons were affected, with two to four persons involved in each outbreak.

SF is a contagious disease caused by bacteria. Patients usually acquire the infection through either respiratory route or direct contact with infected respiratory secretions. 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 SF 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. SF 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.



To prevent SF, the following measures are advised:

- 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; and
- Patients who are suffering from scarlet fever should not go to schools or child care centres until they fully recover.

If you notice an increase in the number of children/staff with symptoms of scarlet fever or an increase in the number of absentees, 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. SK CHUANG)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health