

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (73) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.19

23 July, 2013

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**Vigilance against Respiratory Viral Infections**

We would like to inform you that our latest surveillance data showed that the local activities of seasonal influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) infections increased in the past few weeks. The latest influenza detection reported has increased from 84 in week ending July 6 to 118 in the week ending July 20. During the same period of time, the number of institutional influenza-like illness outbreaks increased from one to six, affecting a total of 28 persons. The current circulating influenza viruses mainly included influenza A(H3N2) (69.5%), influenza A(H1N1)2009 (26.3%) and influenza B (4.2%).

Separately, the weekly number of RSV detections recorded also increased from 70 in the week ending July 6 to 98 in the week ending July 20. Two outbreaks related to RSV infection were reported in week ending July 20.

Influenza and RSV are spread by droplets or direct contact with infectious secretions. Young children, elderly people and patients with chronic diseases are more prone to influenza infection and its complications. As kindergartens and schools are collective assembly places and young children are incapable of taking proper personal care, infectious diseases like influenza could be easily spread among people through their daily contact.

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



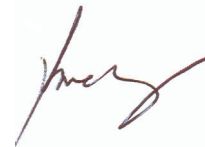
to note that the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has issued guidelines to school on prevention of communicable diseases which can be accessed at [http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/School\\_full\\_eng\\_20110822.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/School_full_eng_20110822.pdf).

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 Centre for Health Protection ([www.chp.gov.hk](http://www.chp.gov.hk)).

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK CHUANG)  
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
Department of Health