

CHP investigates hand, foot and mouth disease outbreak in kindergarten and child care centre in Kowloon City

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (July 8) investigating an outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) in a kindergarten and child care centre in Kowloon City, and again urged the public, schools and institutions to maintain strict hand, personal and environmental hygiene.

The 19 affected students, seven boys and 12 girls aged 2 to 6, as well as one staff member, have developed fever, oral ulcers and rash over the hands or feet since May 25. All of them sought medical attention. Three affected students required hospitalisation and were discharged after treatment. All patients are in a stable condition.

The respiratory specimens of two affected students tested positive for enterovirus (EV) upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit to the school and advised the management on necessary infection control and preventive measures. The school has been put under medical surveillance. Investigations are ongoing.

"HFMD is common in children while adult cases may also appear. It is usually caused by enteroviruses such as Coxsackie virus and EV71. It is clinically characterised by maculopapular rashes or vesicular lesions occurring on the palms, soles and other parts of the body such as the buttocks and thighs. Vesicular lesions and ulcers may also be found in the oral cavity. Sometimes patients present mainly with painful ulcers at the back of the mouth, namely herpangina, without rash on the hands or feet," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"HFMD occurs throughout the year with the usual peak occurring from May to July. A smaller peak may also occur from October to December. According to the CHP's latest surveillance data, the local activity of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) is currently at a high level. As young children are more susceptible, parents should stay alert to their health. Institutional outbreaks may occur where HFMD can easily spread among young children with close contact," the spokesman added.

To prevent HFMD, members of the public, and especially the management of institutions, should take heed of the following preventive measures:

- Maintain good air circulation;
- Wash hands before meals and after going to the toilet or handling

diapers or other stool-soiled materials;

- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly, especially when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and oral discharges properly;
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as furniture, toys and commonly shared items with 1:99 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes, and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Use absorbent disposable towels to wipe away obvious contaminants such as respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, and then disinfect the surface and neighbouring areas with 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Children who are ill should be kept out of school until their fever and rash have subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted;
- Avoid going to overcrowded places; and
- Parents should maintain close communication with schools to let them know the latest situation of the sick children.

The public may visit the CHP's page on [HFMD and EV71 infection](#) and [Public Health Advice for Play Facilities](#) for more information.

FS to attend Annual Meeting of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in Luxembourg

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, will depart for Luxembourg in the early hours on July 11 (Thursday) to attend the Annual Meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

While in Luxembourg, Mr Chan will also call on the AIIB President, Mr Jin Liqun, and financial officials of other regions attending the meeting.

Mr Chan will return to Hong Kong at around noon on July 15. During his absence, the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, will act as Financial Secretary.

Successful prosecutions by EPD for two cases of illegal waste disposal following blitz operation

Three persons were convicted and fined a total of \$12,000 today (July 8) at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) as a result of illegal waste disposal at Chung Hom Kok Road and Pak Pat Shan Road in the Southern District of Hong Kong Island.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spares no effort to combat illegal waste disposal activities on all fronts. In addition to being assisted by surveillance camera systems in law enforcement, the EPD enhances inspections of fly-tipping black spots in various districts and carries out blitz operations according to a risk-based strategy. In December last year, the EPD successfully intercepted two cases of illegal waste disposal at Chung Hom Kok Road in Stanley and Pak Pat Shan Road in Tai Tam. Three offenders were caught in the blitz operation, which was proactively carried out in Southern District by the EPD based on analysis of intelligence and information collected at the scene. The waste deposited, including debris and waste produced from demolition in renovation works, not only created obstruction to passages, but also caused environmental hygiene problems.

A spokesman for the EPD reminded all members of the renovation, construction and transportation sectors that they must properly deliver commercial and industrial waste as well as construction waste to government waste management facilities in accordance with the law. Under the WDO, first-time offenders who dispose of waste in public places are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.

Test results of targeted surveillance on coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms in ready-to-eat food all satisfactory

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 8) announced the results of a recently completed targeted food surveillance project on coagulase-positive staphylococci

organisms (including *Staphylococcus aureus*) in ready-to-eat food. All samples passed the test.

A spokesman for the CFS said that a total of 300 ready-to-eat food samples were collected from different retail outlets (including online retailers) and food factories for testing of coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms this year. The samples included meat, poultry and their products (for example shredded chicken, siu mei and lo mei), salad, sashimi and sushi, dessert, Chinese cold dishes, sandwiches and steamed rice rolls.

The spokesman pointed out that *Staphylococcus aureus* is a common bacterium that can cause food poisoning. It exists widely in the environment and is commonly found in the nasal cavity, throat, hair and skin of healthy individuals. It is also present in large numbers in wounds and infected regions. If food handlers do not observe good personal hygiene, *Staphylococcus aureus* can pass to foods from them. Foods stored at ambient temperature for a prolonged period will allow the toxin-producing *Staphylococcus aureus* to multiply and form elaborate enterotoxins which can cause food poisoning. Although most cases of infection are caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*, other coagulase-positive staphylococci species can also produce enterotoxins which can lead to food poisoning.

Food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms is usually associated with foods that require considerable manual handling during preparation and no subsequent cooking is required before consumption. The poisoning risk cannot be eliminated by reheating as enterotoxins produced by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms cannot be destroyed under normal cooking temperatures. Common symptoms of food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms include nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain, often accompanied by diarrhoea.

"Despite the fact that test results of the samples were all satisfactory, the trade and the public should not take the risk lightly. They should always maintain good personal, environmental and food hygiene to ensure food safety. To prevent food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms, members of the public are reminded to keep perishable foods or leftovers at or below 4 degrees Celsius or above 60 degrees C. The trade should adhere to the Good Manufacturing Practice that cooked food should be cooled from 60 degrees C to 20 degrees C as quickly as possible (within two hours), and from 20 degrees C to 4 degrees C within four hours or less," the spokesman said.

Task Force on School-based Management

Policy submits review report to EDB (with photo)

The Task Force on School-based Management (SBM) Policy today (July 8) submitted its review report to the Education Bureau (EDB).

The Chairman of the Task Force, Mr Tim Lui, said, "Since its establishment in November 2017, the Task Force has looked into the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided schools and related issues carefully. During the review process, the Task Force had launched an extensive consultation to collect views from the education sector and stakeholders for formulating the final recommendations."

He added that the Task Force had considered all the views collected and hoped that with the joint efforts of the Government and the education sector, the recommendations of the Task Force will be fully carried out to achieve greater effectiveness in implementing the SBM policy, thereby fostering the provision of quality education that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

The Task Force set up under the Education Commission (EC) has put forward a total of 27 recommendations with a view to improving the quality of governance, strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals, and enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance. These include, among others, the provision of additional resources to strengthen administrative support of schools and management committees, streamlining of school administration, enhancement of training and support for school managers, proposal of soft training indicators for school supervisors and managers, and strengthening of communication between the EDB/Incorporated Management Committees and stakeholders. Despite the fact that complaint handling lies beyond the scope of the SBM policy, the Task Force, in view of the extensive discussion and concerns of the sector about handling of teachers' complaints in early 2019, deemed it necessary to deliberate on this issue and make recommendations for improvement in a bid to further enhance the fairness, impartiality and acceptance of the complaint handling mechanism. The recommendations are set out in the Annex.

Having received the review report, the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung said, "I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to the Chairman and members of the Task Force for their hard work and contributions to the review. The Task Force has been dedicated to conducting a thorough and in-depth review on SBM and various key issues with professional insight and wide engagement of stakeholders, before making the pragmatic and constructive recommendations.

"The EDB attaches great importance to the effective implementation of SBM. We have earlier adopted the Task Force's preliminary views and announced

that as from the 2019/20 school year, all public sector schools (including special schools) and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme would be provided with additional resources of \$570 million each year to strengthen the administrative support for schools and their management committees, including the implementation of the 'One Executive Officer for Each School' policy. The EDB will further study the review report and consider the recommendations in detail for mapping out the way forward."

The full review report can be viewed on the EC website at www.e-c.edu.hk/en/publications_and_related_documents/education_reports.html.

