

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and two outbreaks of influenza A at kindergartens

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 18) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection, as well as two influenza A outbreaks at kindergartens in Tung Chung and Fanling.

The case of severe paediatric influenza A infection involves a 4-year-old boy with good past health, who has presented with fever, cough and runny nose since January 15 and convulsion on January 17. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of United Christian Hospital on January 17 and was transferred to the paediatric intensive care unit of the hospital on the same day for further management. His respiratory specimen tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalopathy. He is now in a critical condition.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had not received seasonal influenza vaccination for the current season and had no travel history during the incubation period. His parents had upper respiratory tract infection symptoms recently. His father is now recovered while his mother has been advised to seek medical attention. Both have been in a stable condition. His other home contact has remained asymptomatic so far. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

Regarding the outbreaks at kindergartens, the case in Tung Chung affected 12 boys and seven girls, aged 3 to 5, as well as one female staff member, who have developed fever, cough and sore throat since January 5. Nineteen of them sought medical attention. One of them required hospitalisation and was discharged upon management. They have been in a stable condition. The nasopharyngeal swab specimen of one affected student tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing.

Another case in Fanling affected eight boys and 12 girls, aged 3 to 6, who have developed similar symptoms since January 7. All sought medical attention. Two of them required hospitalisation and were discharged upon management. They have been in a stable condition. The nasopharyngeal specimens of five affected students tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing.

"The latest surveillance data indicated that the local seasonal influenza activity has continued to increase in the past two weeks and may continue to rise in the period ahead. We urged the community to continue heightening their vigilance against seasonal influenza. As young children are

particularly affected in this influenza season, we appealed to parents who have not yet arranged vaccination for their children in this season to do so as soon as possible to strengthen their personal protection," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Particularly, children, people aged 50 to 64 years, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses who have not yet received influenza vaccination this season are urged to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination. They should promptly seek medical advice if influenza-like symptoms develop so that appropriate treatment can be initiated as early as possible to prevent potential complications. Parents and carers are reminded to render assistance in prevention, care and control for vulnerable people," the spokesman added.

Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses. For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).

Suspected MERS cases reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 18) reported two suspected cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit. The case is detailed below:

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|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sex | Female | Male |
| Age | 4 | 66 |
| Affected area involved | Dubai, United Arab Emirates | Israel |
| High-risk exposure | Nil | Nil |
| Hospital | Princess Margaret Hospital | Princess Margaret Hospital |
| Condition | Stable | Stable |
| MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result | Negative | Pending |

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially

camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

[Hong Kong residents born in 1985 or 1986 to start applying for new smart identity cards](#)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) announced today (January 18) that from January 21 to March 30, 2019, Hong Kong residents born in 1985 or 1986 should apply for a new smart identity card in person at a Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre (SIDCC). The SIDCCs will be open from Mondays to Saturdays, from 8am to 10pm (except public holidays).

Eligible applicants may make appointment bookings via the Internet (www.gov.hk/newicbooking), the ImmD mobile application or the 24-hour telephone booking hotline 2121 1234. The ImmD appeals to applicants to pre-fill the application form when making appointment bookings through the Internet or mobile application in order to enjoy a faster registration process.

Applicants should bring along their existing smart identity cards when they proceed to SIDCCs. If their smart identity cards do not bear the "A", "****" or "R" symbols, they should also bring along their travel documents showing their current residential status in Hong Kong.

For this replacement exercise, the ImmD is implementing a new caring arrangement under which eligible applicants may bring along up to two family members or friends aged 65 or above to replace their smart identity cards together during the same visit.

The above call-up period is only eligible for Hong Kong residents born in 1985 or 1986. The ImmD will make announcements on the arrangements for other age groups in due course. If eligible Hong Kong residents are absent from Hong Kong during their call-up period, they can apply within 30 days of their return to Hong Kong.

For details of the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise, please visit the website www.smartid.gov.hk or call the enquiry hotline 2824 6111.

Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres

| Name | Address |
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| 1. Hong Kong Island Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre | Room 200, 2/F, Shui On Centre, 6-8 Harbour Road, Wan Chai |
| 2. East Kowloon Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre | Unit 1, 2/F, Manulife Financial Centre and Unit 1B, 3/F, Manulife Financial Centre, Tower A, 223-231 Wai Yip Street, Kwun Tong |
| 3. West Kowloon Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre | 12/F, Gala Place, 56 Dundas Street, Mong Kok |
| 4. Tsuen Wan Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre | Shop S201, 2/F, Smartland, 50 Texaco Road, Tsuen Wan |
| 5. Sha Tin Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre | Shop G26, G/F and Shop 123, 1/F, Kings Wing Plaza 1, 3 On Kwan Street, Sha Tin |
| 6. Sheung Shui Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre | 7/F, Spot, 48 Lung Sum Avenue, Sheung Shui |
| 7. Tuen Mun Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre | Shop L414B, Level 4, Leung King Plaza, Leung King Estate, 31 Tin King Road, Tuen Mun |
| 8. Yuen Long Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre | Shop 50, G/F, Manhattan Plaza, 23 Sai Ching Street, Yuen Long |
| 9. Tseung Kwan O Smart Identity Card Replacement Centre | Shop 20-26, G/F, Corinthia by the Sea, 23 Tong Yin Street, Tseung Kwan O, Sai Kung |

Clusters of Influenza A cases in Kowloon Central Cluster

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson of Kowloon Central Cluster made the following announcement today (January 18):

Three patients (aged 42 to 65) in a female ward of the Department of Medicine in Queen Elizabeth Hospital presented with upper respiratory tract infection symptoms since January 15. Clinical tests were arranged and the test results were positive for Influenza A. The patients concerned are being treated under isolation with all in stable condition.

In addition, regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients infected with Influenza A in a Medicine and Geriatrics ward in Kwong Wah Hospital, one more 78-year-old female patient in the ward presented with fever and respiratory symptoms. A clinical test was arranged and the test result was positive for Influenza A. The patient concerned is being treated under isolation and is in stable condition.

Infection control measures in Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Kwong Wah Hospital have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the wards are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Taxi Driver Commendation Scheme recognises quality taxi drivers (with photo)

The prize presentation ceremony for the Taxi Driver Commendation Scheme 2018 jointly organised by the Committee on Taxi Service Quality (CTSQ) and the Transport Department (TD) was held today (January 18). Ten taxi drivers were presented with "quality taxi driver" awards, and one of them received the "most popular taxi driver of the year" award, in recognition of their service excellency and endeavours to provide quality taxi services to passengers.

Speaking at the prize presentation ceremony, the Chairman of the CTSQ

and Commissioner for Transport, Ms Mable Chan, encouraged passengers to appreciate taxi drivers more for providing quality services so that more drivers can be commended to let members of the public know more about their quality service and meaningful stories of good deeds. In addition, she said she hoped there would be mutual respect and politeness between drivers and passengers.

Ms Chan also expressed appreciation for the support from the taxi trade in the past year to enhance the quality of taxi services as recommended by the CTSQ. The CTSQ and the TD rolled out an online training course recently for enhancing the service quality of in-service taxi drivers to boost their customer service skills. The training course is composed of five short videos covering communication skills and building relationships with passengers; handling customer conflicts; basic customer service skills; introduction to the relationship between taxi owners/management agents and drivers; and knowledge about wheelchair accessible facilities in taxis.

A total of 10 drivers were given "quality taxi driver" awards this year. The reasons for their nomination included assisting passengers to find lost property, helping passengers proactively, having good driving attitude and being sincere to passengers, being responsible towards passengers and participating in charitable work. This year, the "most popular taxi driver of the year" award was presented to the taxi driver with the highest votes in the public online voting held in November and December last year.

The Taxi Driver Commendation Scheme receives nominations all year round. Nominations will be assessed by the CTSQ based on the driving record, conduct, on-job training record, good behaviour being commended and passengers' satisfaction on taxi services provided by the driver concerned. Ten of the nominees obtaining the highest combined scores from the public voting and a professional assessment panel will be given "quality taxi driver" awards.

To encourage public participation, members of the public who vote for awarded taxi drivers may win a "Smart Voters" prize. A total of 100 prize winners will be presented with souvenirs. The lucky draw result will be announced in early March.

A list of the award winners and details of the Taxi Driver Commendation Scheme and related activities are available at www.ctsq.org.hk/votetaxidriver/en/index.html.

