

# CHP investigates cluster of influenza A infections in primary school

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 17) investigating a cluster of influenza A infections in a primary school in Sham Shui Po. The CHP also appeals to members of the public to remain vigilant, maintain good personal and environmental hygiene, and receive seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV).

The cluster involves 46 persons, including 41 male students aged 7 to 10, and five staff members. They developed symptoms on or after June 7. Among them, 41 persons sought medical attention and three were hospitalised. Two were subsequently discharged and one remains hospitalised. All of the patients had mild symptoms. Laboratory testing revealed that respiratory specimens of the aforesaid three hospitalised students tested positive for influenza A virus, while rapid antigen tests revealed that 32 teachers and students also tested positive for influenza A virus.

The personnel of the CHP had inspected the primary school twice and found that inter-class and inter-grade activities were organised in the schools, and that individual function rooms and classrooms were not adequately ventilated, and items shared among the students were not thoroughly disinfected. The CHP has provided advice to the school management on prevention of upper respiratory tract infection, including thorough cleaning and disinfection, opening windows where appropriate for better ventilation, refraining infected students from going to school, stopping inter-class and inter-grade activities, wearing masks by teachers and students during the outbreak and conducting temperature monitoring on entering school, etc. The school is currently under medical surveillance.

To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that children with fever, regardless of the presence of respiratory symptoms, should not be allowed to attend school, and should consult a doctor promptly. In addition, children, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses are urged to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza.

Influenza vaccination has been proven to be one of the most effective ways to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications, while significantly reducing the risk of hospitalisation and death from seasonal influenza. All persons aged 6 months and above (except those with known contraindications), particularly the elderly and children who have a higher risk of becoming infected with influenza and developing complications, should be vaccinated. Although the level of influenza activity has remained low since the end of the winter influenza season, sporadic outbreaks in schools and residential institutions caused by influenza viruses are still possible, especially when there are gatherings of crowd coupled with inadequate infection control measures. The number of severe cases involving adults and cases of severe

paediatric influenza-associated complications recorded in the influenza season earlier this year has significantly decreased compared with the 2018/19 influenza season. It is believed that this is the result of the general public's willingness to receive the SIV.

For the latest information, members of the public can visit the CHP's [seasonal influenza](#) and [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) webpages.