

CHP investigates outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection at special school in Yuen Long

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (March 18) investigating an outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection (URI) at a special school in Yuen Long, and appealed to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

The outbreak affected five male students and 10 female students aged 6 to 19, as well as eight female staff members, who have developed URI symptoms including runny nose, cough and sore throat since March 8. Nineteen of them sought medical attention and none required hospitalisation. All patients are now in stable condition.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit and advised the school to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory tract infections. The centre has been placed under medical surveillance.

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

Members of the public, particularly children, the elderly and those with chronic diseases, should wear a face mask and consult a doctor promptly if they develop symptoms of respiratory tract infection.