

DH to launch Pertussis Vaccination Programme for pregnant women in Hong Kong

The Department of Health (DH) today (June 28) announced that as part of routine antenatal care, a Pertussis Vaccination Programme for pregnant women in Hong Kong will be launched at Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) under the DH from July 2.

To provide direct protection for infants against pertussis, the MCHCs of the DH will provide pertussis vaccinations for women between 26 and 34 weeks of pregnancy. In the first two months upon the launch of the programme, pregnant women who reached 35 weeks or above and have not received pertussis vaccines can also participate in the programme. Vaccination appointments will be provided to pregnant women when they attend antenatal check-ups at MCHCs. Antenatal clinics of the Hospital Authority will also launch the Pertussis Vaccination Programme for pregnant women.

In view of a surge in notifiable pertussis cases locally in recent years, the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases under the Centre for Health Protection of the DH recommended last year that pregnant women receive one dose of acellular pertussis-containing vaccine during each pregnancy. This would be part of routine antenatal care regardless of previous vaccinations and any natural infection history against pertussis (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/recommendations_on_pertussis_vaccination_for_pregnant_women_in_hk_formatted.pdf). Through such vaccination, pregnant women will develop and pass the antibodies to the foetus before delivery, providing direct protection for infants against pertussis.

The DH also reminds that the antibodies passed to the baby from the mother will wane gradually as he/she grows. As such, the baby is still required to be vaccinated according to the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme (HKCIP) when he/she reaches the age of 2 months.

The public may visit the page on "Protect your Babies from Pertussis" (s.fhs.gov.hk/c07eu) and the HKCIP page of the DH's Family Health Service (www.fhs.gov.hk/english/main_ser/child_health/child_health_recommend.html) for more information.