

Severe case of influenza A infection in unvaccinated child reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (February 1) received a report of a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection in a boy who had not yet received the seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV). He is still hospitalised and in critical condition. The CHP urged the public who have not yet received the SIV to act immediately to minimise the risk of serious complications and death after infection.

"The 19 month-old boy with good past health developed a fever and cough since January 30. He attended Hong Kong Baptist Hospital yesterday and was later transferred to Kwong Wah Hospital, where he remains in the paediatric intensive care unit. His nasopharyngeal swab specimen was tested positive for the influenza A (H1) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with severe pneumonia," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The boy had no travel history during the incubation period. His household contacts, so far, are asymptomatic. An initial investigation revealed that he did not receive 2024/25 SIV. The CHP reiterated its call to the parents to bring their children to receive SIV as soon as possible.

"Including the above-mentioned boy, the CHP has recorded nine cases of severe influenza virus infection in children since the start of this influenza season in early January, seven of whom were unvaccinated. Influenza vaccination has been scientifically 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) who have not yet received SIV should act immediately, particularly the elderly and children who have a higher risk of becoming infected with influenza and developing complications," the spokesman said.

Furthermore, the SIV coverage rate for children aged 6 months to under 2 years remained relatively low at about 20.9 per cent as of January 26. Although slightly higher than that of the same period last year, it was still lower than that of other age groups of children. To enhance relevant vaccination services and boost the vaccination rate, the Government has opened the DH's Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) to all children aged 6 months to under 2 years. Parents may book an appointment for their children to receive vaccinations at designated MCHCs via the [online booking system](#).

The spokesman reminded the public that Hong Kong is currently in the influenza season. The seasonal influenza activity is expected to increase further while the activity of other respiratory infectious diseases may also increase. To protect their health and that of their family members, the

public should not only receive SIV, but also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene, but also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene, and take the following measures to prevent contacting influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Patients can wear surgical masks to prevent transmission of respiratory viruses. Therefore, it is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- High-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised) should wear surgical masks when visiting public places. The general public should also wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Practise hand hygiene frequently, 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 mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid sharing personal items;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, consider to refrain from going to work or school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, perform physical activity regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

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