

Severe case of influenza A infection in unvaccinated infant reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 27) received a report of a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection in a baby girl who had not yet received the seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV). She is still hospitalised and in serious 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 10 month-old girl with good past health developed a fever, cough and seizure since January 23. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of United Christian Hospital on the same day and was admitted to the paediatric intensive care unit immediately. Her nasopharyngeal swab specimen tested positive for the influenza A (H1) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalitis," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The girl had no travel history during the incubation period. One of her household contacts had upper respiratory symptoms prior to her disease onset. An initial investigation revealed that she did not receive 2024/25 SIV. The CHP reiterated its call to the parents to bring their children to receive an SIV as soon as possible.

"Including the above-mentioned baby girl, the CHP has recorded five cases of severe influenza virus infection in children since the start of this influenza season in early January, four 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.

The spokesman reminded the public that Hong Kong has entered 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 the SIV, 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;
- 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;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, consider refraining 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.