

CHP investigates hand, foot and mouth disease outbreaks in three schools

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 17) investigating outbreaks of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) in two secondary schools and one primary school, and again urged the public, schools and institutions to maintain strict hand, personal and environmental hygiene.

The first outbreak affected four male and 16 female students aged 12 to 17 at a secondary school in Sha Tin. They have developed oral ulcers, rash and vesicles on hands or feet, and fever, since November 2. All of them sought medical attention but none required hospitalisation.

The second outbreak was at a secondary school in Kwai Chung, affecting 16 male and three female students aged 16 to 18, as well as one female staff member. They have developed oral ulcers, rash over hands or feet and fever since December 7. All of them sought medical attention and one required hospitalisation.

The third outbreak affected 18 male and two female students aged 6 to 10 at a primary school in Wan Chai. They have developed fever, rash over hands or feet and oral ulcers since November 24. All of them sought medical attention but none required hospitalisation.

All patients of the above outbreaks are now in a stable condition.

Officers of the CHP have conducted site visits to the schools and advised the management on necessary infection control and preventive measures. The schools have been put under medical surveillance. Investigations are ongoing.

"HFMD is common in children while adult cases may also appear. It is usually caused by enteroviruses (EVs) such as Coxsackie virus and EV71. It is clinically characterised by maculopapular rashes or vesicular lesions occurring on the palms, soles and other parts of the body such as the buttocks and thighs. Vesicular lesions and ulcers may also be found in the oral cavity. Sometimes patients present mainly with painful ulcers at the back of the mouth, namely herpangina, without rash on the hands or feet," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"HFMD occurs throughout the year. While the disease activity is usually higher from May to July, a smaller peak may also occur from October to December. As young children are more susceptible, parents should stay alert to their health. Institutional outbreaks may occur where HFMD can easily spread among young children with close contact," the spokesman added.

To prevent HFMD, members of the public, and especially the management of institutions, should take heed of the following preventive measures:

- Maintain good air circulation;
- Wash hands before meals and after going to the toilet or handling diapers or other stool-soiled materials;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly, especially when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and oral discharges properly;
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as furniture, toys and commonly shared items with 1:99 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes, and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Use absorbent disposable towels to wipe away obvious contaminants such as respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, and then disinfect the surface and neighbouring areas with 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Children who are ill should be kept out of school until their fever and rash have subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted;
- Avoid going to overcrowded places; and
- Parents should maintain close communication with schools to let them know the latest situation of the sick children.

The public may visit the CHP's page on [HFMD and EV71 infection](#) and [Public Health Advice for Play Facilities](#) for more information.

Fraudulent website related to China CITIC Bank International Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by China CITIC Bank International Limited on fraudulent website, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the website concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the website should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in

the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Government receives Report No. 59 from Standing Commission

A spokesperson of the Civil Service Bureau said that the Government received Report No. 59 of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service on Review on Civil Service Pay Level Survey and Starting Salaries Survey today (December 17).

"The Pay Level Survey (PLS) and Starting Salaries Survey (SSS) are the key components of the Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism. The review findings and recommendations will provide us with an important basis for how to enhance the relevant surveys in future. The Government is very grateful to the Standing Commission for the time and effort it has devoted to the review," the spokesperson said.

"The Government will study the review findings and recommendations in detail and consult the relevant stakeholders including the staff side. As the review findings may have implications on the relevant arrangements for civil service pay as a whole (including disciplined services and directorate officers) in future, the Government will also invite the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCDS) and the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service (SDCS) to offer their views on the Review Report," the spokesperson added.

Upon receiving the views from the SCDS, SDCS and relevant stakeholders, the Government will submit its recommendations on the way forward to the Chief Executive-in-Council for a decision.

The Improved Mechanism comprises the conduct of three regular pay surveys (i.e. the Pay Trend Survey, PLS and SSS). The Standing Commission has conducted one PLS and three SSSs since the Improved Mechanism was put into practice in 2007. In April 2017, the Government invited the Standing Commission to conduct a review on the PLS and SSS, having regard to the recommendations made by the Standing Commission in the context of the 2013 PLS and 2015 SSS respectively, namely to review the methodology, application issues and frequency for the conduct of the PLS, as well as to conduct a specific study on Qualification Group 8 (Degree and Related Grades) before the next round of surveys, in order to provide useful reference information and a solid basis for the surveys to be conducted in future.

Cross-boundary passenger traffic estimation and arrangements for Christmas and New Year festive periods

The Immigration Department (ImmD) estimates that around 13.49 million passengers (including Hong Kong residents and visitors) will pass through Hong Kong's sea, land and air control points during the upcoming Christmas and New Year festive periods (from December 21 to 26, 2018 and December 29, 2018 to January 3, 2019). Among them, about 77 per cent, or around 10.39 million passengers, will pass through land boundary control points. The number of outbound passengers will be at its highest on December 22 (Saturday) with over 620 000 passengers departing Hong Kong, while the number of inbound passengers using land boundary control points will reach its peak on December 26 (Wednesday) with around 542 000 passengers arriving in Hong Kong.

Lo Wu will be the busiest control point, and it is estimated that there will be around 3.30 million passengers, with a daily average of about 275 000 passengers, travelling via this control point during the festive period. The passenger traffic at the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line and Shenzhen Bay control points will also be heavy, with daily average forecasts of about 169 000 and 139 000 passengers respectively.

To cope with the anticipated heavy traffic during the festive period, the ImmD has redeployed additional staff to reinforce various control points and has minimised leave for front-line officers for flexible deployment and operation of extra clearance counters and kiosks. Additional security guards will also be deployed to provide crowd management support.

Furthermore, the ImmD, the Police, the Customs and Excise Department and the MTR Corporation Limited will set up a joint command centre at Lo Wu Control Point to make necessary arrangements. The ImmD will also establish close communication with the Mainland frontier inspection authorities. To ensure smooth passenger traffic flow, passenger conditions will be closely monitored and appropriate traffic diversion plans will be adopted when necessary.

To avoid congestion and a longer than usual waiting time for immigration clearance, the ImmD advises all land boundary passengers to plan in advance and avoid making their journeys during busy periods, and to keep track of radio and TV broadcasts on traffic conditions at the various control points. The expected busy times at boundary control points are available on the website of the ImmD at www.immd.gov.hk. Furthermore, passengers may also check the estimated waiting times of all land boundary control points at any time or place via the Immigration Mobile Application (ImmD Mobile App). They

can then plan their trips effectively and save time queuing up at control points. The ImmD Mobile App can be downloaded free of charge from the Apple App Store (supports iOS version 9.0 or later) and Google Play (supports Android version 5.0 or later). The links for downloading can also be found on the ImmD website, www.immd.gov.hk. In addition, information on public transport services to and from various control points is available on the Transport Department website at www.td.gov.hk.

The ImmD will upload daily passenger statistics for the above festive period to its website at www.immd.gov.hk for public reference.

For travellers making journeys to the Mainland, the ImmD reminds them to carry their proof of identity and valid travel documents for crossing the boundary. Hong Kong residents should also check the validity of their Home Visit Permits. Non-permanent residents must carry their valid smart identity card as well as their Document of Identity for Visa Purposes or valid travel document.

Holders of the acknowledgement receipt issued due to reported loss or replacement of their Hong Kong identity cards, or children under 11 years old who hold Hong Kong identity cards, should carry a valid travel document or Re-entry Permit.

About 700 e-Channels have been installed at various control points. Hong Kong residents enrolled for the Express e-Channel should re-enrol if they have been issued with a new identity card. Furthermore, re-enrolment is required for enrolled Mainland visitors holding a booklet-type Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao who have changed their enrolment information, e.g. having renewed their exit endorsement. Eligible Mainland holders of the electronic Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (e-EEP) can enrol for the e-Channel service by using their e-EEP and undergoing the enrolment process at a traditional entry counter on their first visit to Hong Kong. Eligible Mainland visitors who have renewed their e-EEP have to go through the aforesaid enrolment process again before they can use the e-Channel.

In addition, all control points have introduced self-service departure for visitors to Hong Kong (Smart Departure) which provides greater travel convenience for visitors. The service employs facial recognition technology for identity verification, which allows eligible visitors holding electronic travel documents to perform self-service departure clearance through Smart Departure e-Channels without prior enrolment.

Hong Kong residents who require assistance while travelling outside Hong Kong may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the ImmD at (852) 1868.

Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service: Report No. 59: Review on Civil Service Pay Level Survey and Starting Salaries Survey

The following is issued on behalf of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service:

The Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service submitted its report on the Review on Civil Service Pay Level Survey (PLS) and Starting Salaries Survey (SSS) to the Chief Executive today (December 17). The report sets out the findings and recommendations of the Standing Commission in relation to the Review.

The PLS and SSS are important components of the Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism. Together with the annual Pay Trend Survey, they serve to ensure broad comparability between civil service pay and private sector pay.

In April 2017, the Government invited the Standing Commission to conduct a review on the PLS and the SSS, including a specific study on the Qualification Group (QG) 8 (Degree and Related Grades). In light of the practical experience gained in conducting a number of pay surveys since the implementation of the Improved Mechanism, the Government considered it opportune to conduct a review before launching the next round of surveys.

A Consultant was appointed to provide professional advice on the Review and collect relevant market data. Besides reviewing the survey methodologies of the PLS and the SSS, a specific study on QG 8 was conducted to investigate further into the distinctive features and characteristics of this QG and to determine whether the SSS methodology should be improved. Pay data on degree graduate entry-level positions in the private sector were collected for comparison with those of the QG 8 ranks in the civil service. Research was also conducted by the Consultant on civil service pay arrangements in five overseas countries (namely Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom), with a view to identifying practices that might be of relevance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The Chairman of the Standing Commission, Dr Wong Ying-wai, said, "Regarding the methodology of the PLS, we recommend the continued adoption of the broadly defined Job Family-Job Level method and the five Job Level categorisation. Key enhancements to the methodology of the PLS which are recommended include increasing the number of Job Families from five to six, broadening the scope of the survey to include more ranks (including entry and promotional ones), increasing the number of surveyed organisations in the

private sector and relaxing the selection criteria for civil service benchmark jobs. In addition, before the onset of the next PLS, a brief study will be conducted to ascertain the latest remuneration arrangements for the medical and health care field before deciding if this field should be excluded from the survey. Other existing practices, such as those in data collection and consolidation, and a survey reference date of April 1, are recommended for the future PLSs and SSSs. Detailed arrangements could be determined after taking into account views from stakeholders including the Staff Sides. We also recommend that a holistic approach should continue to be adopted in considering the application of survey results.

"As for the frequency of conducting the two surveys, we recommend continuing to conduct the PLS at a six-yearly interval and to conduct the SSS (either a comprehensive one or of a smaller ambit) as and when necessary after reviewing the broad indications as revealed by the enhanced PLS and the specific circumstances, which include changes or difficulties in relation to recruitment, appointment or regulatory framework which affect certain entry ranks or QGs, as well as any rapid and unforeseeable changes to the external environment and the socio-economic landscape that may have a significant impact on the employment market in Hong Kong as a whole. Staff Sides request their engagement in the process of consideration."

In addition, having regard to the inherent differences between the private sector and the civil service in human resources management practices, the Standing Commission recommends that when an SSS covering QG 8 is conducted, the feasibility of a more precise selection of private sector jobs for comparison with QG 8 ranks in the civil service should be explored, and a holistic approach should continue to be adopted in interpreting survey results for degree graduates in the private sector and with greater flexibility in relation to the QG.

For QG 3 Group I (Higher Diploma or Associate Degree Grades) and QG 4 (Technical Inspectorate and Related Grades: Higher Certificate or equivalent qualification plus experience), the Standing Commission notes the Staff Sides' comments that the entry requirements of certain ranks, as currently classified in different QGs, may no longer be in synchrony with the current market practices and that the qualification and/or experience possessed by the civil service recruits of some of the ranks are different from and usually higher than the entry requirement. The Standing Commission recommends that the Government further consider the issues identified in relation to the QG framework in light of the findings of future pay surveys. When the SSS involves QG 4, the vetting criteria for data collection from private sector organisations for this QG may be relaxed.

In relation to the research on the civil service pay arrangements in overseas countries, the holistic approach that the Standing Commission has adopted in considering the results of the previous rounds of the PLS and the SSS is in tandem with the common trend identified in the five countries surveyed.

"In formulating our recommendations on the Review to the Chief Executive, it is important for us to strike a balance among the different

interests of the Government, the civil servants and the public. Staff Sides were also consulted in the Review exercise. We consider it prudent to take forward enhancement measures in a progressive manner, having regard to the practical constraints in the survey methodology," Dr Wong said.

"We would like to express our appreciation to all parties that have contributed to the Review, including the Staff Sides of the four central consultative councils and the four major service-wide staff unions, the Civil Service Bureau, the Education Bureau, the Census and Statistics Department and the University Grants Committee Secretariat. Last but not least, our gratitude also goes to the participating private sector organisations for their support and co-operation on the specific study on QG 8," he added.

The Standing Commission Report No. 59 is available for public access on the website of the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service at www.jsscs.gov.hk.

The Standing Commission is appointed by the Chief Executive to advise on the structure, salaries and conditions of service of the non-directorate civilian grades in the civil service. The Standing Commission is chaired by Dr Wilfred Wong Ying-wai. Its members are Mrs Edith Chan Ngan Man-ling, Mr Chan Tze-ching, Ms Christina Maisenne Lee, Mr Lee Luen-fai, Mr Lee Ming-kwai, Ms Angela Lee Wai-yin, Mr Joseph Lo Kin-ching, Ms Elaine Lo Yuen-man, Mr Tony Tse Wai-chuen and Mr Wilfred Wong Kam-pui.