

Government vaccination programmes replace 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine with 15-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 2) announced that the 15-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV15) will be provided to eligible children and elderly persons under the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme (HKCIP) and the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP) (including free and subsidised) respectively from August 5. PCV15 will be replacing the existing 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13), with the aim of strengthening the immunity of children and the elderly against invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD).

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) under the CHP has earlier published an [updated recommendation](#) on the use of pneumococcal vaccines in Hong Kong. The SCVPD recommended to replace PCV13 with PCV15 under both the HKCIP and the Government Pneumococcal Vaccination Programme. Relevant immunisation schedules for children and high-risk individuals will remain unchanged.

Under the HKCIP, children who have been receiving PCV13 can switch directly to PCV15 for their next dose. The immunisation schedule will remain unchanged, i.e. two primary doses given at 2 and 4 months of age, followed by a booster dose at 12 months. Eligible children can receive free vaccinations according to schedule at Maternal and Child Health Centres of the DH. For the address of Maternal and Child Health Centres, please visit [its website](#).

Under the GVP, eligible high-risk elderly persons who have not received pneumococcal vaccines before will receive one dose of PCV15 followed by one dose of the 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (23vPPV) a year after. The immunisation schedule will remain unchanged. For those who have already received a dose of PCV13, they will receive a dose of 23vPPV one year after the previous dose of PCV13, and do not require revaccination with PCV15. In addition, subsidised PCV15 and 23vPPV will continue to be provided to the elderly aged 65 or above under the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS). For details on eligible groups and service providers of the government vaccination programmes of PCV for the elderly, please see the Annex. For the list of enrolled doctors and their service fees, please visit the [eHealth System \(Subsidies\)](#) website.

In 2023/24, the total doses of pneumococcal vaccine (PV) administered under the GVP and the VSS are about 56 200 and 53 700 respectively. Under the two government vaccination programmes, about 684 000 elderly persons aged 65 or above had already received at least one dose of PV, with an overall coverage rate of 41.8 per cent.

A spokesman for the DH said that a total of 53 IPD cases have been recorded in Hong Kong from January to June this year, with about 36 per cent (19 cases) of the patients being elderly persons aged 65 or above. While the figures are lower than the corresponding figures during the same period before the COVID-19 pandemic (2015 to 2019), which ranged from 94 to 107 cases (elderly cases ranged from 38 to 48), members of the public should still get pneumococcal vaccinations on time for personal protection.

For individuals not eligible for relevant government vaccination programmes, they may choose to receive any locally registered pneumococcal vaccines at their own expense upon discussion with their family doctors.

The public may call the CHP's hotline (2125 2125) or visit the CHP's [Vaccination Schemes page](#) for more details of the vaccination programmes.

SJ reviews CSD passing-out parade (with photos)

â€‹The Correctional Services Department (CSD) held a passing-out parade at the Hong Kong Correctional Services Academy today (August 2). The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, reviewed the parade, marking the graduation of 30 Officers and 130 Assistant Officers II.

At the parade, the CSD Guard of Honour and passing-out correctional officers assembled to form the abbreviation of the Department "CSD" and two Chinese characters of "the rule of law" during a foot drill demonstration, symbolising their devotion to Hong Kong and determination to uphold the rule of law. They also assembled to form a two-layer shield pattern, symbolising that the Hong Kong National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance will continue to uphold the principles of the rule of law and effectively prevent, suppress and punish acts and activities endangering national security, thereby safeguarding the country and Hong Kong.

Speaking at the parade, Mr Lam said that the CSD shoulders the important missions of safeguarding national security and upholding the rule of law, and is committed to ensuring the overall stability of Hong Kong society. With the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law, offenders involved in the black-clad violence in 2019 have been arrested and sentenced. Thanks to the fearless efforts by a team of professional and well-trained correctional officers in preventing and combatting illicit activities inside correctional institutions, Hong Kong has achieved a major transition from chaos to order and restored social stability.

He said that the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance which came

into effect in March this year empowers the Commissioner of Correctional Services to act as a gatekeeper regarding the granting of remission of persons in custody (PICs) convicted of offences endangering national security, which reflects the importance of the CSD in safeguarding national security and upholding Hong Kong's rule of law.

Mr Lam commended the CSD for actively launching a series of new rehabilitation services to assist PICs to smoothly reintegrate into society as law-abiding citizens. For instance, the Ethics College was set up in Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution and Lo Wu Correctional Institution last October to provide a one-year full-time Diploma of Applied Education Programme for enrolment by adult PICs and help them develop law-abiding awareness and good characters.

He also recognised the CSD's efforts in promoting anti-crime and community education to instil in young people proper values and disseminate the messages of safeguarding the country and home, leading a law-abiding and drug-free life and supporting offender rehabilitation, so that they will become responsible and law-abiding citizens. The CSD has also conducted a course on the criminal justice system recognised under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework for trainees of its youth uniformed group, the Rehabilitation Pioneer Leaders, to cultivate them as a law-abiding young generation.

Mr Lam encouraged the passing-out correctional officers to rise up to challenges with courage, and be strongly committed, highly disciplined and staunchly devoted to duties, as well as continuing to uphold the rule of law and work in unison for the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong and making contribution to the steadfast and successful implementation of "one country, two systems".

During the parade, Mr Lam presented the Principal's Shield to Officer Ms Yung Hing-yuen; and the Golden Whistle to six Assistant Officers II, namely Mr Ho Chun-ngai, Ms Lim Yuet-pan, Mr Choy Ho-yiu, Mr Lam Yu-lok, Mr Ngan Chi-ming and Mr Ng Hok-hin, for their outstanding performance in the recruit training.





FEHD strives to ensure food safety of school lunch boxes (with photos)

To enhance food safety and hygiene awareness among licensed food factories supplying school lunch boxes, and to prepare for the new school year, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) and the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) launched a series of operations to inspect licensed food factories supplying school lunch boxes in various districts of Hong Kong with a view to ensuring food safety.

A spokesman for the FEHD said today (August 2), "Starting from July 31 to the end of August, the FEHD will inspect food factories supplying school lunch boxes to ensure that the licensing conditions in respect of food handling and processing are observed by the operators, and that hygienic standards stipulated in the laws are met. Food samples will be collected for testing. Meanwhile, the FEHD staff will also provide hygiene education to operators and staff of food factories, distributing food safety pamphlets to remind them of the proper way of handling school lunch boxes."

The CFS hosted an online trade meeting on July 11 to remind lunch box suppliers to adhere to good hygiene practices when preparing food and establish a food safety plan based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system to lower the risks of food contamination. Lunch

box caterers can make use of the guideline ["Developing a School Food Safety Plan Based on HACCP system \(for School Lunch Box Caterers\)"](#) to learn more about how to enhance the safety of lunch box production.

Furthermore, to ensure food safety on campuses, the CFS arranged an online seminar for schools on July 5, highlighting food safety hazards such as choking and food allergies, and emphasising the need for vigilance among teaching staff and food handlers in schools. At the same time, schools are also reminded to order lunch boxes from suppliers that hold a valid Food Factory Licence issued by the FEHD and are endorsed to provide lunch boxes. Before signing contracts with suppliers, schools should visit the premises to ensure that food handlers observe food safety and hygiene practices.

The CFS has published ["A Practical Guide for Ensuring Food Safety in Schools and Childcare Facilities"](#), to which schools and childcare facilities can refer when choosing lunchbox suppliers and ensuring food safety on campus. For further details, please visit the "Safe Food at School" thematic webpage (cfs.gov.hk/school).



[Update on cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci cases at Kowloon Hospital](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) carrier cases, the spokesperson for Kowloon Hospital made the following update today (August 2):

Following a contact tracing investigation, one more patient, a 91-year-old male in the extended care ward, was identified as a carrier of VRE while not having signs of infection. The patient is currently hospitalised at Queen

Elizabeth Hospital for other medical needs and is in stable condition.

The hospital will continue the enhanced infection control measures and closely monitor the situation of the ward concerned. The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health for necessary follow-up.

CHP investigates confirmed Mpox case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) said today (August 2) that it is investigating a confirmed Mpox (also known as Monkeypox) case, and urged the public to heighten vigilance and avoid close physical contact with persons suspected of contracting Mpox. Meanwhile, high-risk target groups are advised to receive Mpox vaccinations.

The case involves a 30-year-old male patient with good past health. He developed a skin rash on July 26. He visited private doctors on July 27 and 31, and attended the Yau Ma Tei Male Social Hygiene Clinic of the DH on July 31. He is in stable condition and arrangements have been made for him to be admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital.

According to the patient, he had history of high-risk exposure in Hong Kong during the incubation period. An initial investigation revealed that no epidemiological linkages between this case and other confirmed cases recorded in Hong Kong earlier have been found so far. The CHP is continuing its epidemiological investigations of the case and will report the case to the World Health Organization.

The CHP appeals again to high-risk target groups to receive Mpox vaccinations with a view to lowering the risk of infection or the possibility of having more severe symptoms after infection. Persons who experience Mpox symptoms (including rashes, fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion, muscle pain, and severe headaches) or suspect themselves of being infected are advised to seek medical attention and receive treatment at once, and they should not engage in activities with others during which other people may have contact with their skin rash or body fluids. Members of the public should maintain good personal and hand hygiene to prevent virus transmission or infection through contact. They should also avoid close physical contact with persons or animals suspected of infection.

The CHP had earlier set up an Mpox telephone hotline (2125 2373). The hotline operates from Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) from 9am to 5pm, which enables those who suspect or are concerned they have had high-risk contact with confirmed patients, in particular men who have sex with men or those who have sexual practices with strangers, to make enquiries and receive relevant health advice.

The DH provides vaccination services for high-risk groups of MPox. The following high-risk target groups can receive Mpox vaccinations on a voluntary basis:

1. Individuals with high-risk sexual practices, e.g. having multiple sexual partners, sex workers, or having a history of sexually transmitted infection within the past 12 months;
2. Healthcare workers responsible for caring for patients with confirmed Mpox;
3. Laboratory personnel working with zoonotic pox viruses; and
4. Animal care personnel with high risk of exposure in case of Mpox occurrences in animals in Hong Kong.

High-risk target groups can receive Mpox walk-in vaccinations at all of the DH's Social Hygiene Service Clinics (SocHS) (namely Chai Wan SocHS, Wan Chai Male SocHS, Wan Chai Female SocHS, Yau Ma Tei Male SocHS, Yau Ma Tei Female SocHS, Yung Fung Shee SocHS, Fanling SocHS and Tuen Mun SocHS). Further information of the clinics including their locations is available at www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele_chc/tele_chc_shcf.html and www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele_chc/tele_chc_shcm.html.

Meanwhile, the DH's Kowloon Bay Integrated Treatment Centre and Yau Ma Tei Integrated Treatment Centre, and the Hospital Authority's Special Medical Clinics at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital will also provide Mpox vaccination services for their clients.

For more details, please visit the CHP's page on [Mpox](#).