

# CHP investigates outbreak of acute gastroenteritis at kindergarten in Shatin

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (June 9) investigating an outbreak of acute gastroenteritis (AGE) at a kindergarten in Shatin, and hence reminded the public and management of institutions to maintain personal and environmental hygiene against AGE.

The outbreak involves 20 pupils, comprising 13 boys and seven girls aged 3 to 6, and one staff member. They developed vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain since June 6. Seven of the affected pupils sought medical attention, and none required hospitalisation. All patients are in stable condition.

According to the CHP's epidemiological investigation, one of the students in the outbreak had first vomited at school on June 6. Other students and staff then developed symptoms in subsequent days. The outbreak has a higher chance of person-to-person transmission or environmental contamination, while the chance of involving food poisoning is relatively low.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit and provided health advice to the staff of the kindergarten concerning proper and thorough disinfection, proper disposal of vomitus, and personal and environmental hygiene. The kindergarten has been put under medical surveillance.

Investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP reminded that alcohol-based handrub should not substitute hand hygiene with liquid soap and water, as alcohol does not effectively kill some viruses frequently causing AGE, e.g. norovirus. Members of the public are advised to take heed of the following preventive measures against gastroenteritis:

- Ensure proper personal hygiene;
- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food and eating, after using the toilet or after changing diapers;
- Wear gloves when disposing of vomitus or faecal matter, and wash hands afterwards;
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas or items promptly and thoroughly with diluted household bleach (by adding one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite to 49 parts of water). Wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Pay attention to food hygiene;
- Use separate utensils to handle raw and cooked food;

- Avoid food that is not thoroughly cooked;
- Drink boiled water; and
- Do not patronise unlicensed food premises or food stalls.

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The public may visit the CHP's website ([www.chp.gov.hk](http://www.chp.gov.hk)) or call the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111) for more information.

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## **CHP investigates outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection at residential child care centre**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 9) investigating an outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) at a residential child care centre in Causeway Bay, and appeals to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

The outbreak involves 20 pupils, comprising three boys and 17 girls aged 4 to 6. They developed symptoms since May 15. All of them sought medical attention, eight of whom required hospitalisation, and they have been discharged after management. Four of them tested positive for human metapneumovirus upon laboratory testing. All of them are in stable condition.

The CHP has provided preventive advice against URTI to the residential child care centre, such as advising the residential child care centre to arrange cleaning and disinfection, to open windows where appropriate for better ventilation and to separate affected students from other students, etc. The residential child care centre has been placed under medical surveillance.

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses, and note the following:

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- Surgical masks can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- For high-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised), 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 nose and mouth 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, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

Members of the public, particularly children, the elderly and those with chronic diseases, should consult a doctor promptly if they develop symptoms of respiratory tract infection.

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## Secretary for Health and delegation start three-day visit in Shanghai (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, and his delegation started a three-day visit in Shanghai today (June 9). They called on the Shanghai Municipal Health Commission and visited the Renji Hospital affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine.

The delegation paid a visit to the Renji Hospital affiliated to Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine in the morning and met with the President and Deputy Party Secretary of the hospital, Mr Xia Qiang. They inspected the relevant healthcare services provided by the hospital, which is the largest liver transplant centre on the Mainland and the largest international paediatric liver transplant centre. The delegation then proceeded to tour the Huangpu District Dapujiao Community Health Service Center to learn about the latest developments in Shanghai's strengthened tiered diagnosis for enhancing the capacity of community healthcare services.

Professor Lo went on to meet with the Party Secretary and Director of the Shanghai Municipal Health Commission, Mr Wen Daxiang, and briefed him on the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic in Hong Kong and the latest developments of various healthcare policies, including the Primary Healthcare Blueprint released last year that set out a range of development directions and strategies in strengthening the primary healthcare system of the city. Moreover, the two parties discussed and exchanged views on issues covering

healthcare talent exchange and training between Hong Kong and Shanghai, development of Chinese medicine, and control and prevention of infectious diseases.

Professor Lo said, "I, together with the health department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, shall continue to maintain close ties with the Shanghai Municipal Health Commission, with a view to deepening exchanges and co-operation of the two places in the healthcare aspect."

The delegation will continue its visit in Shanghai tomorrow (June 10).





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## [Record of discussion of meeting of Exchange Fund Advisory Committee Currency Board Sub-Committee held on April 27](#)

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

(Approved for Issue by the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee by circulation)

Report on Currency Board Operations (December 31, 2022 – April 17, 2023)

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The Currency Board Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee) noted that the Hong Kong dollar (HKD) traded within a range of 7.8072 – 7.8500 against the US dollar (USD) during the review period. The HKD softened upon the fading of the seasonal funding demand for HKD at year-end 2022, and stayed close to the weak-side Convertibility Undertaking (CU) since mid-February this year amid the selling pressure from carry trades. The weak-side CU was triggered six times between mid-February and mid-April. With the Hong Kong Monetary Authority buying HK\$39.96 billion under the weak-side CU, the Aggregate Balance fell correspondingly to around HK\$57 billion. The HKD interbank interest rates decreased during the review period, and the spreads of the HKD-USD interbank interest rate generally widened in the negative territory. Overall, the HKD exchange and interbank markets continued to trade in a smooth and orderly manner.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Monetary Base decreased to HK\$1,879.75 billion at the end of the review period. In accordance with the Currency Board principles, all changes in the Monetary Base had been fully matched by changes in foreign reserves.

The Report on Currency Board Operations for the review period is at Annex.

### Monitoring of Risks and Vulnerabilities

The Sub-Committee noted that the recent banking problems in the US and Europe had underscored the fragility of market confidence amid tightening global financial conditions. While swift policy responses had been rolled out to forestall further escalation of the banking stress, lingering concern about the health of financial institutions might weaken market confidence further and heighten the risks of credit retrenchment, which might lead to a sharper slowdown in global growth ahead. Meanwhile, the still-strong inflation pressure in major advanced economies was likely to necessitate a continued tightening bias by major central banks, accentuating the trade-offs among price stability, financial stability and growth in the near term.

The Sub-Committee noted that economic activities had started to normalise in Mainland China following the reopening, with major economic indicators showing improvement in Q1 2023. As for the Asia-Pacific region, while the banking problems in the US and Europe and the increased uncertainty surrounding the US interest rate outlook so far had not triggered any funding market stress, it was noted that the external environment would likely remain volatile and the related impact on the region would warrant close monitoring.

The Sub-Committee noted that Hong Kong's merchandise exports remained weak in Q1 2023, but visitor arrivals and retail sales revived visibly on the back of the reopening of Mainland China and Hong Kong. The economic growth of Hong Kong was expected to stage a strong rebound this year, although the outlook would face evolving uncertainties, especially those relating to the US policy interest rate and the recovery pace of inbound tourism. Meanwhile, housing prices and transactions both picked up in early 2023 as market sentiment improved.

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## [SITI to visit Germany](#)

The Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, will depart for a visit to Germany tomorrow (June 10) late evening to promote exchanges and collaboration on innovation and technology (I&T) development between Hong Kong and Germany.

During Professor Sun's visit to Germany, he will give a keynote speech on Hong Kong's attractiveness and the Government's support for start-ups at the opening ceremony of the AsiaBerlin Summit 2023. This flagship event, held between June 12 and 15, is the annual summit of year-long AsiaBerlin activities where policymakers, startups and investors meet to discuss the newest tech trends and cross-border collaboration between Asia and Berlin.

Professor Sun will also meet with local I&T leaders and tech companies to learn about the latest developments in advanced manufacturing and tech industries in Germany, and introduce to them investment and business opportunities in the I&T area in Hong Kong. He will visit a local university and research organisations.

Professor Sun will return to Hong Kong in the morning on June 16. During his absence, the Under Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Ms Lillian Cheong, will be the Acting Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry.