

監測及流行病學處



Surveillance  
And  
Epidemiology  
Branch

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25 September 2019

Dear Operator/ Manager/ Infection Control Officer,

**Vigilance against Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) and  
Acute Gastroenteritis (AGE)**

I would like to draw your attention to the recent increase in the activities of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) and acute gastroenteritis (AGE), and urge institutions to be vigilant against the diseases.

**HFMD**

The summer peak of HFMD in 2019 started in May and the HFMD activity remained at a high level throughout June and July. After a transient decrease in August, the local HFMD activity has increased again after the start of the new school year in September. There was significant increase in the number of institutional outbreaks in the past two weeks, from 24 (affecting 112 persons) in the week ending 14 September to 42 (affecting 183 persons) in that ending 21 September. Thirty-five outbreaks (affecting 97 persons) have already been recorded in the first three days of this week. These 101 outbreaks occurred in child care centres/kindergartens (60), primary schools (25), secondary schools (13) and others (3).

Besides, surveillance data based at Accident and Emergency Departments and sentinel child care centres/kindergartens showed that the HFMD activity remained at a



衛生防護中心乃衛生署  
轄下執行疾病預防  
及控制的專業架構  
The Centre for Health  
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high level. As of 24 September, a total of five cases of enterovirus (EV71) infection and eight severe paediatric enterovirus infection (other than EV71 and poliovirus) has been recorded in 2019.

HFMD is a viral infection commonly seen in children. In Hong Kong, HFMD occurs throughout the year with the usual peak season occurring from May to July. A smaller peak may also occur from October to December. Common symptoms of HFMD include fever, sore throat and skin rash over the hands and feet. Although HFMD is usually self-limiting, some patients, especially those infected with EV71, may develop complications like myocarditis, encephalitis or poliomyelitis-like paralysis.

### **AGE**

The CHP also recorded an increased number of institutional outbreaks of AGE in the past few weeks. The number of AGE outbreaks increased from two (affecting 26 persons) in the week ending on 7 September to seven (affecting 77 persons) in that ending 21 September. The 15 outbreaks recorded in the past three weeks occurred in child care centres/kindergartens (9), primary schools (3), secondary school (1), elderly home (1) and other (1). AGE is usually caused by norovirus or rotavirus infection. They can be transmitted by consumption of contaminated food, contact with the vomitus or excreta of infected persons, contaminated objects and aerosol spread with contaminated droplets of splashed vomitus. They are highly infectious and may result in outbreaks that are difficult to control.

As daycare and residential institutions are at risk of communicable disease outbreak, I would urge you to keep vigilance against communicable diseases. The ***“Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly”*** and ***“Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities”*** contain practical information and control measures on the prevention of communicable diseases and are available at: <https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/recommendations/35/index.html?f=478>.

If you notice an increase in number of residents or staff with symptoms of HFMD and AGE, please inform the Central Notification Office of CHP as early as possible at Fax: 2477 2770 or Tel: 2477 2772 so that investigation and control measures can be initiated as soon as possible.

For the latest information on communicable diseases, please visit CHP's webpage at:

- HFMD and EV71 infection (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/16354.html>)
- Acute diarrhoeal diseases  
(<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/24/10.html>)

Please draw the attention of the healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above. Thank you for your unfailing support in prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
Department of Health