

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (46) in DH CDB/8/22/1 Pt.4  
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6 November 2024

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**Vigilance against Enterovirus 71 Infection**

We would like to draw your attention to the recent detection of a HFMD outbreak caused by enterovirus 71 (EV71) in a child care centre (CCC), and enlist your support in the prevention of the disease.

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) confirmed that a HFMD outbreak in a CCC reported last week was caused by EV71, with a total of eight children having been involved so far. The CHP has advised the CCC to suspend its service for 14 days from 1 November. Medical surveillance of all children in the CCC is still ongoing.

The local HFMD activity still remains at a high level currently. Latest surveillance data showed that 46 outbreaks (affecting 113 persons) were recorded in the past two weeks (20 October - 2 November). As of 5 November, seven outbreaks involving 15 persons had been reported this week. The outbreaks were mainly recorded in kindergartens, CCC and primary schools. In addition, surveillance data from sentinel kindergartens/child care centres (KG/CCC) has shown a significant increase in HFMD activity. So far, six cases of laboratory confirmed EV71 infection were recorded this year, and one of them developed severe complication of meningitis.

HFMD is an infection commonly seen in children. 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.

Maintaining good personal and environmental hygiene is the most important measure to prevent HFMD and EV71 infection. **Alcohol-based handrub should not substitute hand hygiene with liquid soap and water, as alcohol does not effectively kill some viruses causing HFMD (e.g. EV71).** Schools are recommended to take the following measures to prevent HFMD and EV71 outbreaks:

- Maintain good communication with parents and advise them to keep their



children at home for rest when they develop fever or rash. People who develop symptoms suggestive of HFMD should seek medical advice promptly.

- Encourage staff to screen children for signs and symptoms of HFMD before they enter the school. Children with HFMD should be excluded from school until fever has subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted. As an extra precaution, children with EV71 infection are advised not to go to school for another two weeks after all symptoms have subsided, since the virus may be excreted in stool for some weeks and the infection is associated with a higher risk of complications.
- Supervise children on personal hygiene practices, especially on how to wash the hands properly with liquid soap before meals and after going to the toilet, cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing, and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly.
- Avoid high-risk play facilities such as ball pools.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surface, furniture and toilets regularly with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 99 parts of water). Disinfect toys/places which are contaminated by secretions or excreta with 1 in 49 diluted household bleach.
- Ensure the household bleach used has not expired. For effective disinfection, diluted bleach should be used within 24 hours after preparation, as effectiveness would decrease with time if left unused.
- As undiluted bleach liberates a toxic gas when exposed to sunlight, it should be stored in a cool and shaded place out of reach of children.
- Remind staff to wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water after changing diapers for each child, to disinfect the diaper-change area by diluted bleach, and to dispose of soiled diapers properly.
- Keep the environment clean and hygienic, and follow the “Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools/Kindergartens /Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres /Child Care Centres” which is available at [http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines\\_on\\_prevention\\_of\\_communicable\\_diseases\\_in\\_schools\\_kindergartens\\_kindergartens\\_cum\\_child\\_care-centres\\_child\\_are\\_centres.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_schools_kindergartens_kindergartens_cum_child_care-centres_child_are_centres.pdf).
- Incorporate in your health education to children that when they are having holidays outside Hong Kong, they should still remember to keep their hands clean and avoid contact with other sick children.

If there is a suspected HFMD outbreak (e.g. two or more students in the same class or in the same setting in a KG/CCC developing symptoms of HFMD in succession within a short period), please inform the Central Notification Office of the CHP as early as possible. For more information on the prevention of HFMD and EV71 infection, please visit the CHP website at [http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view\\_content/16354.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/16354.html)

Yours faithfully,



(Dr Albert AU)  
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
Department of Health