

## **Winter is coming**

### **Don't let flu stand a chance**

January to March is usually the peak season for influenza in Hong Kong. We have to beware.

Influenza is a highly infectious disease caused by various types of influenza viruses. Infected persons usually have fever, sore throat and cough. They may also have symptoms like headache, muscle pain, runny nose, tiredness, diarrhea and vomiting. The disease is usually self-limiting with recovery in 2 to 7 days. However, it may become serious if it causes complications such as chest infection or bronchitis (inflammation of the airways).

“You should take adequate rest and drink plenty of water if you get the infection. If symptoms persist, you should see a doctor,” Dr THAM of the Department of Health advises the public.

Antibiotics are drugs for treating bacterial infections and they

cannot work for viral infections such as influenza. Hence, it is unnecessary to take antibiotics unless influenza is complicated by bacterial infection.

Building up body resistance helps to prevent influenza. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, and avoid overstress and smoking. In addition, one should observe hygiene practices and consider having vaccination as indicated.

Dr THAM reminds the public further, “Should you develop respiratory tract infection, you should wear a mask; avoid going to crowded places; and seek medical advice promptly.”

For more information about influenza and its vaccination, please visit <http://www.chp.gov.hk>.