

March 21, 2003

To All Licensees of Food Premises

**Health Advice on the Prevention of Respiratory Tract Infections**

In the wake of recent atypical pneumonia incidents in Hong Kong, the Department of Health has issued a set of health advice that is also applicable to all food premises. Attached is a copy of the advice for you and staff to refer to and follow.

We also urge you to adopt the following measures immediately to protect the health of your staff and customers:

- Step up cleaning, inspection and maintenance for all ventilating systems in the premises, including air outlets, air filters, fresh air inlets and ventilating ducts.
- Keep the ventilating systems of the premises in operation during business hours.
- In addition to providing customers with tableware for their own use, licensees of restaurants and factory canteens should also take the initiative to provide customers with additional chopsticks or spoons for the common serving of food.
- Tableware/towels provided to customers must be thoroughly washed and sterilized before re-use.
- Step up cleansing and disinfection of the walls, floors, utensils, tables, chairs and equipment on the premises.
- Any employee found suffering from respiratory tract illness should cease work immediately and consult a registered medical practitioner.
- All food, beverage and tableware must be stored and covered properly.

In order to stay healthy and avoid business loss, you should strengthen the supervision on your staff to ensure that they strictly observe the above health advice and that issued by the Department of Health.

If you have any enquiry about this letter, please contact the Senior Health Inspector of your District Office (Environmental Hygiene).

Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

## **Health Advice on the Prevention of Respiratory Tract Infections in Public Places**

**Members of the public** are advised to avoid frequenting crowded public places to prevent the spread of respiratory tract infections. When visiting crowded places such as cinemas and restaurants, the following precautionary measures should be taken:

- Maintain good personal hygiene. Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing
- Dispose of used tissue paper properly
- Keep hands clean. Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions e.g. after sneezing
- Do not share towels
- Consult your doctor promptly if you develop respiratory symptoms, and follow instructions given by your doctor including the use of drugs as prescribed and adequate rest as appropriate
- Patients should put on masks to reduce the chance of spread of infection

**Workers in public places** should take the following precautionary measures to reduce the chance of spread of infection :

- Maintain good personal hygiene. Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing
- Wash hands after sneezing, coughing or cleaning the nose
- Consult your doctor promptly if you develop respiratory symptoms
- Allow plenty of fresh air into the indoor environment
- If the facilities are mechanically ventilated, ensure frequent air exchanges and proper maintenance and cleansing of the system
- Ensure that toilet flushing apparatus is functioning properly
- Provide toilets with liquid soap and disposable tissue towels or hand dryers
- Cleanse and disinfect the facilities (including furniture and toilet facilities) regularly (at least once a day), using diluted household bleach (i.e. adding 1 part of household bleach to 99 parts of water), rinse with water and then mop dry
- If the facilities are contaminated with vomitus, wash / wipe with diluted domestic bleach (mixing 1 part of bleach with 49 parts of water) immediately

Department of Health  
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