Spike in measles cases since start of year

Felicia Choo

The number of measles cases since the start of the year is more than three times that of the same period last year, but no deaths have been reported, said the Ministry of Health (MOH).

In the first 11 weeks of the year, there have been 38 cases of measles, compared with 11 cases last year. It is also the highest number recorded for the first 11 weeks period since 2015.

MOH stressed the public there is no evidence of further spread of the outbreak.

“T he majority of reported cases in 2019 wereinglead spread local infections, except for few separate instances of spread to a family member or close friend,” it said.

Measles, which affects the respiratory system and is often fatal in skin rash, is highly transmissible among people who have not been vaccinated.

Measles vaccination is compulsory by law for all children living here, while the National Adult Immunisation Schedule also advises adults who have not been vaccinated to do so.

The vaccine is available at polyclinics, general practitioner clinics and private paediatric clinics.

In 2018, 38 people were infected with measles.

Professor Leo Yee Sin, executive director of the National Centre for Infectious Diseases, said: “We need to pay close attention to the situation.”

Measles is a preventable, highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus.

Infection • Virus spreads through the air through coughing and sneezing
Symptoms • Infection starts with a fever, runny nose, cough, red eyes, and sore throat • Rash appears on the face and spreads over the body

MEASLES EXPLAINED

• Pneumonia
• Diarrhoea
• Encephalitis
• Blindness

Complications

• Blindness
• Encephalitis
• Death

In the Philippines, Vietnam, India and Thailand.

In Ukraine, a measles outbreak this year left 11 people dead and more than 30,000 infected.

The disease has been setbacks continuing in the United States and New Zealand.

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Before the introduction of vaccine in 1963, an estimated 2.6 million people a year died of measles