

Anti-mosquito measures urged on festive occasion

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (September 13) urged the public to carry out anti-mosquito measures while celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival to guard against mosquito-borne diseases.

"Eliminating stagnant water as breeding sites for mosquitoes and avoiding mosquito bites are key to preventing mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever (DF) and chikungunya fever (CF)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

When doing outdoor activities such as visiting parks, grass pitches and beaches during the Mid-Autumn Festival, members of the public should apply DEET-containing mosquito repellents to exposed parts of the body and clothing.

In addition to taking personal protective measures, members of the public should also maintain strict environmental hygiene by removing stagnant water quickly in outdoor and household settings in order to stop mosquitoes from breeding.

Regarding the latest DF situation in Hong Kong, from September 6 to 12, the CHP confirmed nine imported DF cases. The patients had been to the Philippines (four cases), Cambodia (one case), India (one case), Nepal (one case), Singapore (one case) and Thailand (one case) during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (September 12), 147 cases had been recorded this year, as compared with 106 cases recorded in the same period last year. All the cases recorded in 2019 were imported, mainly from Thailand (30), Malaysia (24) and Cambodia (20).

The CHP has been closely monitoring the latest DF situation in neighbouring and overseas areas. DF is endemic in many tropical and subtropical areas of the world. According to the World Health Organization, some Asian countries are experiencing unusually high numbers of DF cases for this time of year. The number of cases in several countries including Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam was about two to six times the number for the same period in 2018.

According to the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, Guangdong is currently in the epidemic season of DF. As of August 31, 2 005 cases have been recorded in Guangdong this year, which was significantly higher than that in the same period last year (378 cases). In Taiwan, as of yesterday (September 12), 460 cases (including 83 local cases) have been recorded in 2019. According to the health authority of Taiwan, the number of imported DF cases recorded so far this year was the highest compared to the number for the same period in the past 10 years.

Detailed information on the latest DF situation in Hong Kong as well as neighbouring and overseas countries and areas this year has been uploaded to the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/df_imported_cases_and_overseas_figures_eng.pdf). Members of the public should stay vigilant and carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures.

"Apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from areas affected by DF should apply insect repellent for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor," the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, the CHP recorded one CF case during the period from September 6 to 12. The patient had been to Thailand during the incubation period. As of yesterday (September 12), nine confirmed CF cases had been recorded this year, comprising seven imported from Thailand and two imported from Myanmar.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF page of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the [CF page](#) of the CHP, the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).