

## Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the service demand surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rate in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

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## Ping Shan Tin Shui Wai Swimming Pool temporarily closed

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 15) that Ping Shan Tin Shui Wai Swimming Pool in Yuen Long District has been temporarily closed for cleaning and superchlorination following the discovery of a small amount of vomit in the pool.

It will be reopened at 11.03am today.

The department appeals to swimmers to be considerate and to keep the swimming pools clean. They are advised not to swim after a full meal and should use the toilet facilities if necessary before swimming.

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## MD announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at

suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (May 15) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.

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## [CHP investigates cases of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (May 14) investigating three cases of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus (HEV) and urged members of the public to be vigilant against hepatitis E infection and to strictly observe good personal, food and environmental hygiene.

The first two cases involves an 81-year-old and a 67-year-old man with underlying illnesses respectively. Both had presented with liver function derangement. They have been in a stable condition all along and no hospitalisation is required.

The third case involves a 74-year-old man with underlying illnesses, who had presented with liver function derangement. He was admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital for management due to underlying illnesses on April 28 and had passed away on May 4.

The blood samples of the three patients were tested positive for rat HEV upon laboratory testing.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations revealed that the three patients resided in Kowloon City, Southern District and Tuen Mun respectively. They could neither recall having direct contact with rodents or

their excreta, nor had noticed rodents in their residence. The 67-year-old patient had travelled to Taiwan and Korea during the incubation period (IP) while the other two patients had no travel history during the IP.

"Based on the available epidemiological information, the source and the route of infection could not be determined. The CHP's investigation is on-going," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"The CHP has already informed the Pest Control Advisory Section of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department about the cases to carry out rodent control measures and survey as appropriate," the spokesman added.

The exact mode of transmission of rat HEV to humans is unknown at the moment. The usual HEV causing human infection is transmitted mainly through the faecal-oral route, for example, due to faecal contamination of drinking water. Besides, foodborne transmission can result from ingestion of undercooked meat or meat products produced from infected animals (HEV has been detected in pig livers). Other rare transmission routes identified include transfusion of infected blood products, organ transplant and vertical transmission from a pregnant woman to her foetus.

To prevent hepatitis E infection, members of the public should maintain good personal and food hygiene. They should adopt the 5 Keys to Food Safety in handling food, i.e. Choose (Choose safe raw materials); Clean (Keep hands and utensils clean); Separate (Separate raw and cooked food); Cook (Cook thoroughly); and Safe Temperature (Keep food at safe temperature) to prevent foodborne diseases.

- Drink only boiled water from the mains or bottled drinks from reliable sources.
- Avoid drinks with ice of unknown origin.
- Purchase fresh food from hygienic and reliable sources. Do not patronise illegal hawkers.
- Clean and wash food thoroughly. Cook food, especially seafood (e.g. shellfish), pork and pig offal, thoroughly before consumption. Avoid raw food or undercooked food.
- Slice raw meat and offal into thin strips to allow thorough cooking, especially during hotpot or congee cooking.
- For sliced pig liver, depending on thickness and quantity, boil at 100°C or stir-fry in hot skillet/wok for at least three to five minutes.
- Heating to an internal temperature of 90°C for 90 seconds is required for cooking of molluscan shellfish. If possible, remove the shells before cooking as they impede heat penetration. Otherwise, boil at 100°C until their shells open; boil for additional three to five minutes afterwards. Discard any shellfish that do not open during cooking.
- For meat and offal, make sure that juices are clear, not red, blood is not visible when you cut the cooked meat and offal.
- When having hotpot, use separate chopsticks and utensils for handling raw and cooked foods to prevent cross-contamination.

Generally speaking, rodents (such as rats) can transmit multiple diseases to humans directly and indirectly. The public are advised to adopt the following measures:

- Eliminate sources of food and nesting places for rodents in living environment. Store food in covered containers and handle pet food properly to avoid it becoming food for rodents;
- Store all refuse and food remnants in dustbins with well-fitted cover. Dustbins must be emptied at least once a day;
- Keep premises, especially refuse rooms and stairways clean. Avoid accumulation of articles;
- Inspect all flowerbeds and pavements for rodent infestation regularly; and
- Avoid high risk activities below to reduce rodent contact:
  - Avoid rodent contact and places dirtied with rodent excreta;
  - Avoid handling rodents with bare hands;
  - Wash hands with liquid soap and water immediately after handling animals, and disinfect contaminated areas; and
  - If wound appears, clean broken skin immediately and cover it properly with waterproof adhesive dressings.

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## **CHP investigates two cases of measles infection**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (May 14) investigating two cases of measles infection.

Both cases involve workers at a shop in Tsim Sha Tsui with an outbreak of measles infection announced yesterday. For the first case, a 27-year-old woman with good past health has developed fever since May 10 and rash since May 13. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department at Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) on May 13. A laboratory test of her respiratory specimen was positive for the measles virus. She has been in a stable condition and reported to have received measles vaccination. She had no travel history during the incubation period and communicable period.

The second case involves a 31-year-old man with good past health who developed rash since May 12. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department at KWH on May 13. A laboratory test of his respiratory specimen was positive for the measles virus. He has been in a stable condition and reported to have received measles vaccination. He had no travel history

during the incubation period and communicable period.

According to both patients, they did not have contact with measles patients during the incubation period. Their home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far and have been put under medical surveillance.

Upon notification of the cases, the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. Investigations are ongoing. The public places the patients visited during the communicable period are listed in the appendix.

For the outbreak of measles infection at the shop in Tsim Sha Tsui, measles mop-up vaccination for workers of the shop has concluded and a total of 143 vaccinations had been given.

A spokesman for the DH said, "Those who might have had contact with the patients during the period of communicability are urged to observe if they have developed measles-related symptoms, and to seek medical treatment immediately if such symptoms appear. If they need to visit any health care facilities during the period of medical surveillance, they should also report whether they have symptoms and prior measles exposure history to the healthcare workers so that appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at the concerned healthcare facilities to prevent any potential spread."

The spokesman explained that measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets spread or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. A patient can pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of skin rash.

"The incubation period (the period from infection to appearance of illness) of measles ranges from seven days to 21 days. Symptoms of measles include fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes. If symptoms arise, members of the public should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should also avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below 1. Those suspected to have been infected are advised to seek medical attention as early as possible and reveal relevant contact history of measles to healthcare professionals," the spokesman advised.

Separately, regarding measles control measures implemented at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), a total of 18 persons had received measles vaccination at the airport vaccination station as at 6pm today, bringing the cumulative number of vaccinations given to 8 414.

From tomorrow (May 15) to May 17, measles vaccination will be provided to airport staff who:

(1) Were born in or after 1967, and have not received two doses of measles

vaccination, and have not been infected with measles before; or  
(2) Have laboratory evidence of testing not positive against measles antibody (IgG).

The vaccination quota for the measles vaccination station at the airport remains at 600 doses daily. The venue and operation hours of the airport vaccination station are as follows:

Venue:	Multi-function Room, HKIA Tower (Level 5, Terminal 2)
Hours:	May 15 to 17 10am to 1pm 2pm to 6pm