

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 14) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Male
Age	11
Affected area involved	Israel
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Princess Margaret Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Pending

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

Cluster of Influenza A cases in Kowloon Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson of Kowloon Hospital (KH) made the following announcement today (January 14):

Eleven patients (aged 49 to 93) and two staff members in a male ward of the Department of Psychiatry in KH presented with upper respiratory tract infection symptoms since January 10. Clinical tests were arranged and the test results were positive for Influenza A. The patients concerned are being treated under isolation with all in stable condition. All staff members are currently on sick leave.

Admission and visiting have been suspended in the ward concerned. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 14) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection.

The case involves an 8-year-old boy with good past health, who has presented with fever, vomiting, confusion and convulsion since January 12. He was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) on the same day and was subsequently transferred to QEH's paediatric intensive care unit for further management yesterday (January 13). He is now in a serious condition.

His respiratory specimen tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalopathy.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had not received seasonal influenza vaccination for the current season and had no travel history during the incubation period. His home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far.

The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

"Hong Kong has entered the 2018-19 winter influenza season. We anticipate that local seasonal influenza activity will continue to rise in the coming weeks and remain at an elevated level for some time. Members of the public should remain vigilant for protection against influenza," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Particularly, children, people aged 50 to 64 years, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses who have not yet received influenza vaccination this season are urged to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination. They should promptly seek medical advice if influenza-like symptoms develop so that appropriate treatment can be initiated as early as possible to prevent potential complications. Parents and carers are reminded to render assistance in prevention, care and control for vulnerable people," the spokesman added.

Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses. For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).

Successful prosecutions by EPD against contractor and lorry driver for illegal horticultural waste disposal in Tai O

An arboricultural contractor and a lorry driver illegally deposited waste wood and soil in Tai O on Lantau Island. They were fined a total of \$15,000 at Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (January 14) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

Last June, a member of the public reported to the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) that someone unloaded waste tree cuttings and soil from a lorry at Lung Shing Street in Tai O, covering an area of about 10.5 square metres. It posed danger and inconvenience to pedestrians and caused environmental hygiene problems. With the licence plate information provided by the member of the public, the EPD was able to trace the

arboricultural contractor and the lorry driver involved. The department subsequently prosecuted them in accordance with the WDO after collecting sufficient evidence.

The EPD spokesman reminded contractors and members of the transportation sectors to dispose of construction or other commercial and industrial waste to the Government waste management facilities in accordance with the law, otherwise, they may be prosecuted by the EPD. According to the WDO, first-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. A maximum fine of \$500,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on the second or subsequent convictions.

The spokesman urged the public to make a report to the department if they witness any illegal disposal of construction or other commercial and industrial wastes. They can record videos or take photos and call the EPD hotline at 2838 3111.

Analytical Accounts of Exchange Fund

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) released today (January 14) the key analytical accounts of the Exchange Fund at the end of December 2018.

Foreign assets, representing the external assets of the Exchange Fund, increased during the month by HK\$19.0 billion to HK\$3,488.5 billion.

The Monetary Base, comprising Certificates of Indebtedness, Government-issued currency notes and coins in circulation, the balance of the banking system and Exchange Fund Bills and Notes issued, amounted to HK\$1,632.6 billion.

Claims on the private sector in Hong Kong amounted to HK\$261.8 billion.

The analytical accounts of the Exchange Fund are released in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and are referred to as the Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank under SDDS (Annex).

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is

made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of January 2019, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

January 7 (Issued)	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
January 14	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
January 31	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
January 31	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account