

# Public urged to heighten vigilance against mosquito-borne diseases (with photo)

In light of the increasing threat of dengue fever (DF) globally, the Department of Health (DH) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (July 18) reminded members of the public to stay vigilant against mosquito-borne diseases, enhance anti-mosquito awareness, implement mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

According to the World Health Organization, the global incidence of DF has increased significantly over the past year. Since 2024, more than 10 million cases have been recorded in the Americas, which is a record high. A total of 37 cases have been recorded in Hong Kong as of yesterday (July 17), of which 34 are imported cases and three are local cases. Most of the imported cases have visited some tourist spots in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, during the incubation period. The three local cases include one recorded in April with a patient living in Siu Sai Wan and two recorded in June with both patients living in Tin Shui Wai. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the DH has conducted active case finding and medical surveillance for the local cases. For the cases in Tin Shui Wai, as of yesterday (July 17), more than 5 200 residents in 2 000 households of the housing estate where the patients residing were reached. So far, no new cases have been found. The prevention and control measures implemented by the CHP in Tin Shui Wai are continuing.

In view of the two local DF cases that occurred in Tin Shui Wai, the FEHD has conducted vector mosquito investigations and targeted mosquito control operations. The FEHD has intensified mosquito prevention and control work in the residences, workplaces and locations visited by the patients during the incubation period and after illness onset. These efforts include:

- conducting fogging operations in the scrubby areas within a 250-metre radius of the related locations to eradicate adult mosquitoes;
- carrying out weekly inspections of the above locations, removing stagnant water, applying insecticide and disposing of abandoned water containers to prevent mosquito breeding; and
- stepping up publicity and education work, including organising health talks, deploying the Mobile Education Centre and distributing leaflets.

The latest territory-wide *Aedes albopictus* mosquito surveillance shows that *Aedes albopictus* is widely distributed in Hong Kong. The hot and rainy weather this summer is conducive to the breeding of mosquito vectors. In addition, more people travelling abroad during the summer may increase the chance of acquiring DF infection, leading to an increase in imported cases. In this connection, the CHP cannot exclude the possibility of a further increase in the risk of local DF transmission. To prevent the further spread

of DF and its evolution into an endemic disease, the public should co-operate with the Government to implement effective mosquito prevention and control measures at this critical juncture.

DF is clinically characterised by high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pain, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph nodes and rash. The CHP appeals to the public, in particular residents in Tin Shui Wai, to pay special attention to anti-mosquito measures. If feeling unwell, one should seek medical advice as soon as possible and call the CHP hotline (2125 2374) if in doubt.

In order to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of the general public towards mosquito-borne diseases and its prevention, the CHP commissioned a survey between January and February of 2024, in which 2 002 members of the public aged 18 or above were successfully interviewed.

In the survey, it was found that the respondents had good awareness of mosquito-borne diseases, with 92.7 per cent of the respondents correctly identifying DF as a mosquito-borne disease, while the figures for Japanese encephalitis and malaria were 83.0 per cent and 68.6 per cent respectively. However, their awareness of the transmission and complications of mosquito-borne diseases was relatively low. Only less than half of them (44.9 per cent) acknowledged that a second infection of DF virus with different serotypes could lead to severe disease, and only about 30 per cent of the respondents could correctly point out that asymptomatic individuals infected with dengue fever virus can transmit the virus to mosquitoes.

The survey also found that the insect repellent knowledge of the respondents was not sufficient. 77.6 per cent of the respondents did not know the effective ingredients of insect repellents, and 98.8 per cent of them were uncertain about the recommended diethyltoluamide (DEET) concentration. Although around 65 per cent of the respondents agreed that insect repellents could protect them from mosquito-borne diseases, the proportion of respondents who could use insect repellents properly was relatively low. 70.0 per cent of them did not check the ingredients when purchasing insect repellents, while 69.7 per cent never applied insect repellents for 14 days when returning to Hong Kong from affected areas of DF to prevent mosquito bites.

A spokesman for the CHP reminded travellers going to DF affected countries or areas to take extra precautionary measures to prevent mosquito bites. Travellers who return from affected areas should apply insect repellent for 14 days after arrival to prevent mosquito bites. If feeling unwell such as having a fever, the person should seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor.

Moreover, the spokesman stressed that the public should read the label instructions carefully when purchasing insect repellents and could choose insect repellents containing DEET. The public should take heed of the tips below when applying DEET-containing insect repellents:

- 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
- Reapply only when needed and follow the instructions.

\* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are prevalent and where mosquito bite is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent. They also should apply insect repellent appropriately for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong to prevent mosquito bites.

Furthermore, 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;
- 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 according to product label and uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

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



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## [Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected dangerous drugs worth about \\$20 million in anti-narcotics operation \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs conducted an anti-narcotics operation between July 4 and yesterday (July 17), and detected six dangerous drugs cases using local co-working spaces and one passenger drug trafficking case at Hong Kong International Airport, seizing a total of about 31 kilograms of suspected methamphetamine and about 5kg of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$20 million.

Through risk assessment, Customs on July 4 inspected an air cargo consignment, declared as a seating chair, arriving in Hong Kong from the United States at the airport. The consignee address was a co-working space on Hong Kong Island. Upon inspection, Customs officers found about 5kg of suspected methamphetamine concealed in the seating chair. Customs revealed that the drug traffickers have attempted to deliver consignments with dangerous drugs to different co-working spaces to evade Customs detection.

After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers found that the consignor concerned adopted the same approach to arrange for five different co-working spaces to receive other consignments, declared as seating chairs and baby toys, arriving in Hong Kong from the United States. The consignment was intercepted on July 5 at the airport and about 20kg of suspected methamphetamine were found concealed in four seating chairs, and about 5kg of suspected cocaine were found concealed in two baby toys. In the six dangerous drugs cases, in which local co-working spaces were being used, Customs seized about 25kg of suspected methamphetamine and about 5kg of suspected cocaine, with a total estimated market value of about \$17 million. .

After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers conducted a controlled delivery operation yesterday in Wong Chuk Hang and arrested one male consignee, aged 38. The arrested person has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. He will appear at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (July 19).

â€‹In addition, Hong Kong Customs yesterday detected a passenger drug trafficking case at Hong Kong International Airport and seized about 6kg of suspected methamphetamine with an estimated market value of about \$3 million.

A 23-year-old male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, yesterday. During Customs clearance, Customs officers found six bags of suspected methamphetamine, with a total weight of about 6kg, inside

his check-in suitcase. The passenger was subsequently arrested.

The arrested man has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. He will appear at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow.

Customs will continue to step up enforcement against drug trafficking activities through intelligence analysis. The department also reminds members of the public to stay alert and not participate in drug trafficking activities for monetary return. They must not accept hiring or delegation from another party to carry controlled items into and out of Hong Kong. They are also reminded not to carry unknown items for other people, nor to release their personal data or home address to others for receiving parcels or goods.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).



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## [HKMA announces stablecoin issuer sandbox participants](#)

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (July 18) the list of participants of the stablecoin issuer sandbox. The following institutions (in alphabetical order of their names) will participate in the sandbox with effect from today:

- JINGDONG Coinlink Technology Hong Kong Limited;
- RD InnoTech Limited; and
- Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited, Animoca Brands Limited, Hong Kong Telecommunications (HKT) Limited.

During the assessment process, these institutions were able to demonstrate genuine interest in developing a stablecoin issuance business in Hong Kong with a reasonable business plan, and that their proposed operations under the sandbox arrangement would be conducted within a limited scope and in a risk-controllable manner.

The sandbox, which was launched in March 2024, is part of the HKMA's efforts in facilitating the sustainable and responsible development of stablecoin ecosystem in Hong Kong. Through the sandbox, the HKMA allows institutions with plans to issue stablecoin in Hong Kong to conduct testing on their operational plans, and also facilitates the two-way communication on the proposed regulatory requirements, with a view to formulating fit-for-purpose and risk-based regulatory regime.

Sandbox participants are expected to comply with the sandbox requirements. They will not handle the general public's funds at the initial stage, and will not solicit funding from the public or offer any products associated with the sandbox. Members of the public should stay vigilant to potential scams purporting to be related to the sandbox. The HKMA will make separate announcement in case sandbox participants are allowed to handle the general public's funds within a limited scope as a result of adjustments to the testing scope.

The HKMA will continue to handle enquiries and applications for sandbox participation. Announcements will be made in a timely manner for any new participants joining the sandbox.

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## [Employer fined for violation of safety legislation](#)

â€‹Vogue Laundry Service Limited was fined \$450,000 at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (July 18) for violation of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance. The prosecution was launched by the Labour Department.

The case involved a fatal accident that occurred on September 22, 2023, at the loading/unloading bay in Hong Kong International Airport, Lantau Island. A delivery worker fell from the tail lift platform of a truck onto the ground and he passed away 17 days later.

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## **Flag-lowering ceremony cancelled**

Owing to the thunderstorm warning, the flag-lowering ceremony to be conducted at Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai at 6pm today (July 18) will be cancelled.

If the thunderstorm warning is cancelled and weather conditions permit by then, the flag-lowering ceremony may be resumed without further notice.