

Update on dengue fever

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 24) reported the latest number of dengue fever (DF) cases, and urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From May 17 to yesterday (May 23), the CHP recorded one imported DF case. The patient had been to Singapore during the incubation period.

As of yesterday, 24 cases of DF, including 23 imported and one local cases, had been recorded in 2024. In 2023, 62 imported cases of DF were recorded.

According to the World Health Organization, the global incidence of DF has markedly increased over the past two decades, posing a substantial public health challenge. In 2023, ongoing transmission, combined with an unexpected spike in DF cases, had resulted in close to a historic high of over 5 million cases and more than 5 000 dengue-related deaths reported in over 80 countries/territories. The latest surveillance data shows that there is an increase in DF cases noted in some places in Asia (such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) compared to the same period last year. Since the beginning of 2024, the Americas, including Brazil, Argentina and Peru, have recorded over 7 million cases, a record number. Detailed information on the latest DF situation in Hong Kong, as well as neighbouring and overseas countries and areas, has been uploaded to the CHP website (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/df_imported_cases_and_overseas_figures_eng.pdf).

"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 a doctor," a spokesman for the CHP said.

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
- Reapply 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.

â€‹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 latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).

[Drug abuse and drug situation in Hong Kong in first quarter of 2024](#)

The Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) noted at its meeting today (May 24) the figures of the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA) and other drug-related figures for the first quarter of 2024. The ACAN noticed that the total number of reported drug abusers in the first quarter of 2024 was lower than that of 2023. However, the figures tend to show greater volatilities in the first quarter of a year. The ACAN will closely monitor the situation in the remaining quarters of 2024, and will at the same time continue to carry out its anti-drug work.

Figures from the CRDA revealed that the total number of reported drug abusers in the first quarter of 2024 was 1 666 while that of the same period in 2023 was 1 863. The number of reported young drug abusers aged under 21 in the first quarter of 2024 was 259. The most common type of drugs abused in the first quarter of 2024 was heroin, followed by cocaine and cannabis. Whereas among young drug abusers aged under 21, the three most common types of drugs abused were cannabis, cocaine and ketamine (commonly known as "K").

According to the figures from law enforcement agencies, the number of persons arrested for drug offences in the first quarter of 2024 was 767, with 62 of them being young drug abusers aged under 21. According to the court

cases concluded for the same period, the conviction rate of persons being prosecuted for drug offences was as high as close to 90 per cent. As for young offenders aged under 21 who were sentenced to imprisonment for drug trafficking, more than half of them were sentenced to over five years in prison, and the longest period of imprisonment was nearly 22 years.

The ACAN expressed grave concern about the situation of cannabis abuse. In particular, cannabis was the most common type of drugs abused by reported young drug abusers aged under 21 in the first quarter of 2024, with over half (51 per cent) of them taking this drug. The ACAN Chairman, Dr Donald Li, said, "Some youngsters consider taking cannabis trendy or a so-called 'chill' lifestyle, and even think that the legalisation of cannabis is a world trend. Such thinking has ignored the medical evidence that smoking cannabis is harmful to health. Cannabis is addictive. Staying away from cannabis is the true 'chill' lifestyle." To raise public awareness of the harms of cannabis, especially awareness among young people, the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau (SB) will launch a new TV Announcement in the Public Interest (API) and the corresponding radio API to disseminate the message that "Cannabis is a drug" in 2024. The website of the ND (www.nd.gov.hk/en/index.html) contains correct information and frequently asked questions about cannabis.

The ACAN continues to express concern about the abuse of cocaine, and supports the Government to keep up its targeted measures. The ND launched a TV and the corresponding radio API in early 2024, describing cocaine abuse as sinking deep into a quagmire. Moreover, the ND has produced an animated video, which is about how a young person had been controlled by his "inner demons" and paid a heavy price for one wrong decision: trying cocaine. Both videos have been uploaded onto the ND's website (www.nd.gov.hk/en/cocaine_info.html) and its social media accounts (the ND's YouTube channel, Facebook page and Instagram account of "narcotics.divisionhk")

Apart from cannabis and cocaine, the ACAN noticed the number of drug trafficking cases involving inbound travellers has increased recently. Dr Li said, "The law enforcement agencies have detected numerous drug trafficking cases involving baggage concealment by air passengers recently. As the summer holiday is approaching, the ACAN will fully support the Government to take law enforcement actions against drug trafficking activities before and during the summer holiday. Cannabidiol, which is known as CBD, has been listed as a dangerous drug. Members of the public should pay careful attention to product labels when travelling during the summer holiday, and should not risk to try cannabis and CBD products, or bring them back to Hong Kong, to avoid breaching the law." The ND also mentioned that since travelling has resumed normal, drug dealers often post recruitment advertisements on dubious websites and social media accounts with offers of free trips and high remuneration to lure members of the public into drug trafficking. The ND will step up publicity and education to remind the public to stay vigilant and not to fall into drug traps driven by greed. Drug trafficking is a serious offence, and offenders upon conviction are liable to a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of \$5 million in Hong Kong, or may even be

sentenced to death in other places.

As regards the challenges posed by emerging new drugs, the Government will continue to stay vigilant in closely monitoring drug trends in and outside Hong Kong, and will take appropriate follow-up actions to safeguard public health. As the summer holiday is approaching, members of the public may be attracted by the novelty of products that contain drugs when travelling to other places. The ND would like to remind the public to say no to drugs at all times, and should never try drugs out of curiosity, even if they are offered for free. When coming across oil and relevant products for heat-not-burn cigarettes or electronic cigarettes, members of the public are urged to pay careful attention if these products contain cannabis, CBD, emerging new drugs, and other harmful substances or poison, and should not try them or bring them back to Hong Kong. The public should not smoke any products.

Members of the public can send messages to professional social workers at 98 186 186 through instant messaging applications WhatsApp and WeChat when they have any doubts about drugs or when they want to seek help. They can also call the 24-hour hotline 186 186. This service is provided by a non-governmental organisation commissioned by the ND.

The figures of the CRDA for the first quarter of 2024 are also available on the website of the ND (www.nd.gov.hk/en/crda_main_charts_and_tables.html).

Government concludes private housing land supply in 2023-24

The Government announced today (May 24) that the actual supply of private housing land in 2023-24 has a capacity to produce around 15 410 flats in total, higher than the estimation of around 14 000 flats in February this year when announcing the overview for the financial year. The increase is mainly attributed to the private development projects not requiring lease modification recorded in the fourth quarter of the financial year. The total supply has exceeded the annual supply target (12 900 flats) by around 20 per cent. This figure has taken into account the private housing land supply from all government land sale and projects of the Urban Renewal Authority, as well as private development/redevelopment projects in the financial year.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, May 24, 2024 is 106.3 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Fraudulent website related to Bank Julius Baer & Co. Ltd.

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Bank Julius Baer & Co. Ltd. relating to a fraudulent website, which has been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the website concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.