

Red flags hoisted at some beaches

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 15) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach, Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Red fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

The fire danger situation today (May 15) is red and fire risk is extreme. The countryside is extremely vulnerable to fire. If you are planning to spend the day in the countryside, please take pre-cooked food for a picnic and take all measures to prevent hill fires. The penalty for lighting fires illegally in the countryside is \$25,000 and a year's imprisonment.

CHP investigates imported case of measles infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (May 14) investigating an imported case of measles infection and reminded the public that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles, and people born outside Hong Kong who might not have received a measles vaccination during childhood should review their vaccination history.

The case involves an 11-month-old girl with good past health. She developed fever, cough and runny nose since May 7, and rash since the following day. She was brought to the Accident and Emergency Department of Pok Oi Hospital on May 9 and admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital on May 10 for treatment. Her respiratory specimen sample tested positive for the measles virus upon nucleic acid testing. She is now in stable condition and is still

hospitalised. Her two household contacts remained asymptomatic.

An epidemiological investigation revealed that the patient was born outside Hong Kong and did not receive measles vaccinations in her home country. She lived overseas during the incubation period and arrived in Hong Kong on April 23. The patient did not have contact with measles patients in Hong Kong. The case has been identified as an imported case. During the communicable period, the patient had visited the Immigration and Registration of Persons – Yuen Long Office (Yuen Long Office) located on Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long, between around 10am and 11.30am on May 6. The CHP will conduct medical surveillance on about 40 staff of the concerned office.

As measles is highly infectious, the CHP has set up an enquiry hotline (2125 2374) for contact tracing of the case. The CHP appealed to the persons who visited the Yuen Long Office located on Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long, between 10am and 11.30am on May 6 to call the hotline. Officers of the CHP will assess their conditions and offer suggestions. The hotline will operate from 9am to 1pm tomorrow (May 15), and from 9am to 5.30pm starting from May 16, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

Investigations are ongoing.

"The global immunisation coverage rates have dropped since the COVID-19 pandemic. Many countries worldwide are facing a resurgence of measles outbreaks. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the number of measles cases had risen worldwide to over 300 000 cases reported in 2023, a roughly 80 per cent increase from 2022. The Western Pacific region recorded a total of about 5 000 cases in 2023, which represented more than a 2.5 times when compared with 2022, with persistent transmission found in the Philippines and Malaysia. In view of the continuous increase in measles cases, the WHO has urged parents to bring their children to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent measles from spreading," a spokesman for the DH said.

The CHP reiterated that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. During the COVID-19 pandemic over the past three years, parents, schools and healthcare workers in Hong Kong continued to support childhood immunisations, striving to maintain the immunisation coverage rates at a high level. As revealed by the vaccination uptake of primary school students and the findings of the territory-wide immunisation surveys regularly conducted by the DH, the two-dose measles vaccination coverage has been consistently maintained at a high level, well above 95 per cent, and the local seroprevalence rates of measles virus antibodies reflect that most of the people in Hong Kong are immune to measles. On the whole, the information available indicates that the risk of large-scale outbreak is considered to be low in Hong Kong. However, it is possible for some not fully vaccinated people to get infected and transmit the measles virus to susceptible people (including children aged below 1 who are not due for the first dose of measles vaccine).

The spokesman reminded members of the public that delays in vaccination

will weaken the protection for children against measles, and parents are reminded to maintain up-to-date vaccination for their children for comprehensive and timely protection. All people who are non-immune to measles, especially foreign domestic helpers, people working or studying in tertiary institutions, and workers of sea/land/air border control points who may be at a higher risk of contacting an imported case, should receive two doses of measles-containing vaccine. In general, people can be considered as non-immune to measles if they (i) did not have the infection confirmed by laboratory test before, and (ii) had not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines in the past, or have unknown vaccination status or unknown immunity against measles. On the other hand, as measles was endemic in Hong Kong and most parts of the world before 1967, people born before 1967 are considered to have acquired immunity to measles through natural infection.

The spokesman supplemented that, members of the public who are planning to travel to places with a high incidence or outbreaks of measles should review their vaccination history and past medical history, especially people born outside Hong Kong who might not have received a measles vaccination during childhood. Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, with unknown vaccination history or unknown immunity against measles, are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccinations at least two weeks before departure.

The spokesman advised, "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."

Besides being vaccinated against measles, members of the public should take the following measures to prevent infection:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- Clean used toys and furniture properly; and
- Persons with measles should be kept out of school till four days from the appearance of a rash to prevent the spread of the infection to non-immune persons in school.

For more information on measles, the public may visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). Members of the public who are going to travel can visit the website of the DH's [Travel Health Service](#) for news of measles outbreaks outside Hong Kong.

Excessive cadmium and methylmercury found in crab sample and escolar sample respectively

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (May 14) announced that a crab sample and a escolar sample were detected with cadmium and methylmercury respectively, which are metallic contaminants, at levels exceeding the legal limit. The CFS is following up on the incidents.

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned crab sample and escolar sample at the import levels for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test results showed that the crab sample contained cadmium at a level of 10.4 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the legal limit of 2 ppm; while the escolar sample contained methylmercury at a level of 2.57 ppm, exceeding the legal limit of 0.5 ppm," a spokesman for the CFS said.

The spokesman said that the CFS had informed the vendors concerned of the irregularities and instructed them to stop sales and remove from shelves the affected products. The CFS is also tracing the sources and distribution of the products concerned.

"Long-term excessive intake of cadmium may affect the kidney functions. Methylmercury is the major form of mercury in fish. At high levels, mercury can affect foetal brain development, and affect vision, hearing, muscle co-ordination and memory in adults. Furthermore, as some international organisations such as the World Health Organization have pointed out, consuming predatory fish species is the main source of mercury intake for human beings. The report of the CFS's Total Diet Study has also pointed out that large fish or predatory fish species may contain high mercury levels (for example, tuna, alfonsino, shark, swordfish, marlin, orange roughy and king mackerel). Hence, groups particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of mercury, such as pregnant women, women planning a pregnancy and young children should opt for fish that are smaller in size for consumption and avoid consumption of the above-mentioned types of fish to minimise excessive exposure to metal contaminants in food," the spokesman added.

According to the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap. 132V), any person who sells food with metallic contamination above the legal limit is liable upon conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment

for six months.

â€‹The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incidents and take appropriate action. Investigations are ongoing.

[Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism meets with trade on development of Hong Kong tourism industry \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, met with representatives from the sectors of tourism, hotel, aviation, catering, retail, etc. today (May 14) to exchange views on how to enhance the speed and quality of the development of Hong Kong's tourism industry and discuss the marketing strategies and tourism promotional directions following the expansion of the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) to cover eight more cities.

At the meeting, Mr Yeung conveyed the care of the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Xia Baolong, towards Hong Kong's tourism industry. He also had in-depth discussion with the representatives on issues as to how to encourage the trade to actively understand the changes, respond to the changes and embrace the changes; how to frequently adopt new ideas and methods to overcome the challenges encountered so as to pursue quality development, realising substantial enhancement in the midst of transformation. It was agreed that Hong Kong's rich tourism resources must be fully explored, and at the same time keep enhancing the quality of services; promote further collaboration between the tourism and related sectors in developing new tourism products and promotion as well as improve service quality, with a view to reinforcing and strengthening Hong Kong's position as "the best tourism destination".

Mr Yeung also expressed his sincere gratitude to the Central Government on the expansion of the IVS to cover eight more cities, as well as the staunch support to Hong Kong. He also discussed with the trade on how to enhance the tourism service and generate more economic benefits following the coverage of the eight cities under the IVS. At the meeting, he expressed his thanks for the trade's efforts over the years and encouraged all sectors to continue to render strategic advice on the further development of Hong Kong's tourism industry.

Mr Yeung said, "The Government attaches great importance to the development of the tourism industry and its contribution to the economy. Promoting Hong Kong's tourism development requires the contribution and support of all sectors. We will work hand in hand with the trade to enhance

the competitiveness of Hong Kong's tourism industry, making the best use of Hong Kong's ample tourism resources and drawing reference from the successful experience of other cities in order to promote innovation and improve policies. In the face of changing visitors' patterns and competition from neighbouring cities, Hong Kong's tourism and related sectors need to be flexible and innovative to uncover more attractions with local characteristics, step up promotion of those attractions to create more diversified, enriching and unique travel experience for visitors so as to pursue the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong'. We will also actively promote continuous enhancement of the quality of services rendered by the trade, and encourage members of the public to join us in extending warm hospitality to our visitors."

At the meeting, Mr Yeung also foreshadowed that the Government would shortly announce the list of mega events for the second half of the year. He encouraged the trade to capitalise on the business opportunities brought by the mega events and make timely preparation and deployment.

