

CHP announces no new local confirmed cases of COVID-19 today

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has announced that as of 4pm today (May 11), no new local confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) have been recorded, and that the number of cases in Hong Kong remains at 1 048 so far (comprising 1 047 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Meanwhile, the CHP is investigating an overseas case. The case involves a 70-year-old female patient who took flight BA27 (economy class) on British Airways from London arriving in Hong Kong on May 10. Her deep throat saliva sample tested positive for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 and she was transferred directly from Hong Kong International Airport to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for management. She is currently in a stable condition. According to the patient, she had received a test whose result was positive for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 in the United Kingdom (UK). The CHP has contacted the health authority in the UK to obtain more information about the case.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "All recent reported cases recorded locally had a travel history during the incubation period. The CHP urges members of the public arriving in Hong Kong to approach the DH's Port Health Division (PHD) officers immediately for follow-up when respiratory symptoms develop. Passengers who have been confirmed as COVID-19 cases abroad, even if they are asymptomatic currently, should approach PHD officers upon arrival to reveal their relevant history for appropriate follow-up by the DH."

Meanwhile, the CHP has noticed that a number of Hong Kong residents, who were earlier stranded in areas of unknown epidemic situation, have been returning to Hong Kong lately. These areas include Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and South Africa. Given limited epidemic information available on the above areas and after reviewing the capacity of quarantine centres, the DH will adopt a prudent approach for these returnees. The DH will continue the current arrangement of transferring the returnees from the above areas (including those arriving by chartered flights or other flights) in coaches to the quarantine centre for a 14-day compulsory quarantine period after collecting their deep throat saliva samples at the DH's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at AsiaWorld-Expo for compulsory COVID-19 testing upon arrival. The CHP will closely monitor the situation locally and overseas, and will adjust the arrangement in a timely manner if necessary.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of infection by contact with infected persons, who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask if having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 3pm today, a total of 109 801 calls had been received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infections and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing.

Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- If having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.