

CHP announces one new confirmed melioidosis infection case over past week

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 18) said that one new confirmed melioidosis infection case had been recorded in the past week (August 12 to 18).

The case involves a 55-year-old male with good past health who lives in Wan Chai. The patient visited Cambodia and Spain during July 19 to August 7. He had presented with fever and respiratory tract infection symptoms since July 30. After his return to Hong Kong, he developed shortness of breath and a decreased general condition on August 12, and attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Ruttonjee Hospital. He was admitted on the same day and is now in critical condition. His blood sample was confirmed positive for *Burkholderia pseudomallei* upon testing.

The CHP is investigating the infection source of the case. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing. A total of eight melioidosis infection cases have been recorded in Hong Kong so far this year. In 2022, 46 melioidosis infection cases were recorded.

A spokesman for the CHP reiterated that person-to-person transmission and animal-to-human transmission are rare, but melioidosis bacteria can survive in the local environment. Melioidosis is an endemic disease in Hong Kong and melioidosis cases have been recorded in Hong Kong each year. According to literature, infection cases are more common after typhoons or storms. The bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei* of melioidosis in soil and muddy water may become exposed to the ground after typhoons or storms, and the bacteria could spread more easily with strong winds or storms. As such, the number of melioidosis cases may increase.

The CHP appealed to members of the public to seek medical advice if they develop symptoms, in particular people with diabetes or other immunocompromised conditions, in order to receive appropriate medical diagnosis and treatment. For more information on melioidosis, please visit the website of the CHP at www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/24/101110.html.