

CHP announces update on measles cases and control measures at airport

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (March 29) investigating an additional case of measles infection and announced an update on the latest control and prevention measures at the airport.

â€‹ The case involves a 49-year-old man who works at Hong Kong International Airport. The patient, who has good past health, developed a cough on March 24 and rash on March 27. He consulted private doctors on March 25 and 26. He sought medical attention at Queen Elizabeth Hospital on March 27 and was admitted for treatment. His respiratory specimen tested positive for the measles virus. He is in a stable condition. His measles vaccination history is unknown and he had no travel history during the incubation period or communicable period.

According to the patient, he did not have contact with measles patients during the incubation period. His home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far and have been put under medical surveillance.

â€‹ Upon notification of the case, the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. Initial investigations revealed that no contact has shown measles-related symptoms so far. The public places the patient visited during the communicable period are listed in the appendix.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "In view of the measles outbreak at the airport, the CHP today launched a pilot programme there to conduct serology tests for people working at the airport on a voluntary basis, aiming to better grasp the overall immunity against measles among airport staff so that the measles control strategy can be fine-tuned.

"The pilot programme has completed its target of recruiting 100 people who work at the airport for blood tests today, hence the blood test station set up by the CHP for the purpose will not be opened this Saturday and Sunday. Airport staff participating in the pilot programme will be individually informed of the result by phone. Those who have tested positive for measles antibodies (IgG) are regarded as immune to measles and there will be no need for further vaccination."

After consideration of the pilot serology test results, the CHP will announce the subsequent arrangements for the measles vaccination exercise at the airport in due course.

â€‹ The measles vaccination exercise at the airport aims to protect those working at the airport who are non-immune to measles. The target group refers to people working at the airport who are:

- (1) Non-locally born or born in Hong Kong from 1967 to 1984; and
- (2) Have not received two doses of measles vaccination; and
- (3) Have not been infected with measles before; and in particular
- (4) Those who need to take care of infants under one year old or pregnant women

The vaccination stations at the airport will remain open until April 4, including Saturday and Sunday. Due to restrictions in the cold chain logistics arrangement for vaccine delivery, the service hours for Saturday and Sunday will be adjusted. Details of the arrangement are as follows:

Venue:	Port Health Office Health Post (South Arrival Apron Passenger Vehicle Lounge, Level 4, Terminal 1)
	Multi-function Room, HKIA Tower (Level 5, Terminal 2)
Hours:	March 30 and 31: 9am to 1pm 2pm to 5pm
	April 1 to 4: 10am to 1pm 2pm to 5pm 6pm to 9pm

A total of 836 persons received measles vaccinations at the vaccination stations as at 5pm today, bringing the cumulative number of vaccinations given to 5 495. A hotline (2125 1122) is set up for public enquiries and operates from 9am to 5.45pm daily. As of 5pm today, the hotline had received a cumulative total of 2 160 enquiries.

Information on the confirmed measles cases in 2019 with their case summary has been uploaded onto the [CHP website](#).

The spokesman explained, "Measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. A patient can pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of skin rash."

The spokesman added, "The incubation period of measles ranges from seven days to up to 21 days. Contacts who are not immune to measles may develop relevant symptoms, such as fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes, in the incubation period. They should observe if they develop such symptoms in the period. If symptoms arise, they should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below one. They should also report their symptoms and prior travel history to healthcare workers so that appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at healthcare facilities to

prevent any potential spread.

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. Members of the public who are planning to travel to places with 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 measles vaccination during childhood. The history of measles vaccination in Hong Kong is available in the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, who do not know their vaccination history or who have unknown immunity against measles are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccination at least two weeks before departure," the spokesman said.

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 rash to prevent spread of the infection to non-immune persons in school.

For more information on measles, please visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). For news of measles outbreaks outside Hong Kong or the latest travel health advice, please visit the website of DH's [Travel Health Service](#).