

CHP closely monitors global situation of measles outbreaks

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (June 11) reported that the outbreak of measles in Okinawa, Japan since late-March is under control and reminded members of the public to undertake continuous vigilance against measles when travelling to other places with high incidence or outbreak of measles.

According to the information from the Government of Okinawa Prefecture, there was an outbreak of measles involving a total of 99 confirmed cases with the index case confirmed on March 20. The last patient in Okinawa did not have any exposure in the community after May 15. Since then, there has been no new case for four weeks, and the Government of Okinawa Prefecture has announced the end of this outbreak of measles.

Meanwhile, measles remain as an endemic infection in many places around the world. In southeast Asia, according to data from the World Health Organization, as of May 11, the 12-month measles incidence (number of cases per million population) has reached 76.9, 61.1, 26.7 and 25.2 in Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand respectively. In Europe, there were marked increases in measles cases in recent months, with the highest 12-month incidence (number of cases per million population) in Greece (255.6), Romania (108.3), Italy (66.6) and France (36.4).

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. As the summer vacation is approaching, members of the public who are planning to travel to places with high incidence or outbreak of measles should review their vaccination history and past medical history, especially non-local born people who might not have received measles vaccination during childhood. Information on the history of measles vaccination in Hong Kong is available from the CHP's [measles page](#).

"For those who had received two doses of measles-containing vaccine or confirmed to have measles infection in the past are considered to be immune to measles," a spokesman for the CHP said.

For those with incomplete vaccination, unknown vaccination history or unknown immunity against measles, they are urged to consult their doctor for advice on measles vaccination at least two weeks before departure, as it takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop and provide protection against measles.

Pregnant women and women preparing for pregnancy who are non-immune to measles as well as children aged under one year who are not due for the first dose of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) combined vaccine under the [Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme](#), are advised not to travel to places with outbreaks of measles.

"If travellers returning from places with high incidence or outbreak of measles develop symptoms of measles (e.g. fever and rash), they should seek medical advice immediately and avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially pregnant women and infants. They should also report their symptoms and prior travel history to the healthcare workers so that appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at the healthcare facilities to prevent any potential spread," the spokesman appealed.

For outbreak news of measles or the latest travel health advice, please visit the website of DH's [Travel Health Service](#). For more information on measles, the public may call the 24-hour health education hotline 2833 0111 or visit the CHP's [measles page](#).