

# CHP closely monitors plague cases in Mainland

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 29) closely monitoring an additional plague case affecting a herder in Inner Mongolia.

According to the Health Commission of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the patient was diagnosed to have bubonic plague on November 27 and had been to a place where plague was known to occur. The patient has been admitted to hospital for treatment under isolation and is in stable condition. Four close contacts have remained asymptomatic so far, and are under medical surveillance.

So far, four cases of plague have been confirmed in the Mainland since November 2019. The other three cases include two cases of pneumonic plague in Beijing, involving a couple from Inner Mongolia; and a case of bubonic plague, involving a man in Inner Mongolia. The CHP issued press releases on these cases on November 14 and 18 respectively to urge the community to heighten their vigilance against plague. According to the latest information from the National Health Commission, all close contacts of the three patients have remained asymptomatic and were released from medical surveillance. As of yesterday (November 28), apart from the above four plague cases, no additional cases have been reported in the Mainland thereafter.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Regarding the recent plague cases that occurred in the Mainland, the CHP has communicated with the National Health Commission to understand the latest situation for risk assessment."

The spokesman said, "Plague is transmitted from an infected animal (mainly rodents) to humans through the bite of its fleas. Plague can also be contracted when cuts or other breaks in the skin come into contact with the body fluid or tissue of infected animals."

The spokesman reminded travellers to avoid visiting plague-endemic areas. They should also heighten vigilance on rodents and prevent flea bites. Insect repellents against mosquitoes may equally prevent bites from fleas and other blood-sucking insects. Formulations in lotions or sprays should contain DEET, IR3535 or icaridin (also known as picaridin) as active ingredients. The public should refer to the CHP's [tips for using insect repellents](#).

"Travellers returning from affected areas with a sudden onset of fever, chills, body pains or chest discomfort should seek medical advice as soon as possible and reveal their travel history for prompt investigation and management. Plague is a statutorily notifiable disease and doctors should report suspected or confirmed cases to the CHP for investigations and control," the spokesman added.

Travellers should take heed of the health advice below during travel:

- Prevent flea bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and trousers, and applying insect repellent/insecticide. DEET-containing insect repellent can be applied to exposed skin and clothing, while insecticide containing permethrin can be applied to clothing, not the skin;
- Avoid going to rural areas, camping or hunting;
- Never touch rodents, dead animals and their tissues or contaminated materials;
- Avoid close contact with patients, especially those with cough or chest infection;
- Avoid going to crowded areas;
- Seek medical care immediately in case of a sudden onset of fever, chills, painful lymph nodes, difficulty in breathing with coughing and/or blood-tainted sputum; and
- Consult a doctor immediately after contact or exposure to pneumonic plague patients or high-risk exposures, such as bites from fleas or direct contact with body fluids or tissues of potentially infected animals, for prompt assessment of the need for preventive medication.

Travellers may visit the CHP's [plague page](#), [Travel Health News](#) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's [advice on rodent control](#) for details.