

CHP investigates 10 additional cases of novel coronavirus infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (February 9), the CHP is investigating 10 additional cases of novel coronavirus infection, taking to 36 the number of confirmed cases so far in Hong Kong.

The first case involves a 24-year-old man with good past health who lives in Hung Fook Mansion, 356-362 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai. He developed fever and cough since January 30 and sought medical attention from a private doctor on the same day. He consulted another private doctor on February 4 and sought treatment at St Paul's Hospital's Outpatient Department on February 6. He then sought medical attention at the Accident and Emergency Department at Ruttonjee Hospital and was admitted for isolation and management on February 8. His respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus. He is in stable condition.

Based on the epidemiological investigations of this case, the CHP has traced and confirmed eight more cases of novel coronavirus infection today (which are cases 3 to 10 today), involving three family clusters. They are all family members and relatives of the first case.

The first family cluster included the male patient's father (68-year-old), mother (57-year-old) and maternal grandmother (91-year-old). The second family cluster included the third younger sister (51-year-old) of the male patient's mother and the male patient's cousins (25-year-old female and 22-year-old male). The third family cluster included the fourth younger sister (50-year-old) of the male patient's mother and the male patient's cousin (23-year-old male). Their respiratory samples were all tested positive for novel coronavirus, and they were admitted for isolation and management at Ruttonjee Hospital and Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital respectively.

According to the 24-year-old patient's information, he had no travel history during the incubation period. On January 26, he had hot pot with 18 relatives, including the above 8 confirmed cases, at Lento Party Room in Kwun Tong. Among them, two more have shown symptoms and are currently hospitalised in Prince of Wales Hospital for treatment. Relevant epidemiological investigations and contact tracing are ongoing.

The second case involves a 70-year-old man with underlying illnesses who resides in Choi Fung Court in Ngau Chi Wan. He developed cough, chills and shortness of breath since January 30 and diarrhoea since February 1. He had consulted two private doctors during the period from February 1 to February 7 and attended the United Christian Hospital on February 8 for persistent chills and shortness of breath where he was admitted for isolation and management. His respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus. He is now in a stable condition.

According to the patient's information, he had no travel history during the incubation period and mainly stayed at his home and his son's home at the same building. His close contacts, namely his wife, son, daughter-in-law, grandson, granddaughter and domestic helper are asymptomatic and quarantine will be arranged.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "According to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, some of the confirmed cases are believed to be locally infected. The CHP strongly urged 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."

The spokesman said, "On the personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when 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. The public should go out less and reduce social activities, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps); after using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province, Health Bureau of Macao.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. The CHP is also closely monitoring and following up on the contact tracing of relevant confirmed cases in the Mainland and overseas. Quarantine will be arranged for close contacts while medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts. For the progress on the contact tracing of the cases, please see annex.

The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) for public enquiries. The hotline operates from 8am to midnight daily. As at 4pm today, a total of 8 825 calls were received.

A dedicated webpage (www.gov.hk/ncv) has been set up by the CHP. Information including the latest local situation, list of buildings and list of flights/trains/ships relevant to the confirmed cases, countries/areas with reported cases as well as health advice and a "Novel Coronavirus Infection Local Situation Interactive Map Dashboard" are available on the webpage to help the public grasp 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 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 liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- 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
- When 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.

The public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province where community transmission of novel coronavirus is occurring;
- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible community transmission of novel coronavirus infection. If it is unavoidable to come into contact with them, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene;
- Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry/birds or their droppings;
- Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- Do not consume game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served;
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
- If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if experiencing a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and

- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.