

CHP investigates 145 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has announced that as of 0.00am, July 27, the CHP was investigating 145 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 2 779 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 2 778 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, three had travel history during the incubation period.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

With soaring numbers of confirmed cases recently, the CHP may need longer time to conduct the epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing. As many cases involved the working population, the CHP appealed to employers that if they are informed by their staff being preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19 or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19, before the CHP formally notifies them regarding the confirmed cases, the employers should put in place work-from-home arrangements for all employees and temporarily close the work place for thorough cleaning and disinfection as soon as possible and if practicable. The employers can also maintain a duty roster of their staff and contact details so that the CHP can conduct contact tracing as early as possible. Meanwhile, as the epidemiological investigations take longer due to sharp increase in the number of recent confirmed cases, and to avoid inaccurate information provided in the annex to the press release issued on the same day, the remarks of epidemiological linkage in the annex have been simplified starting today (July 27). For large clusters with 10 or more confirmed cases and relevant case numbers, please refer to the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the thematic website.

In view of the severe epidemic situation, the CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. As a number of recent cases involve elderly people, the CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with every day tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the

number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges 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. On a 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.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

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 performing 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 doorknobs, 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 litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- 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.