

CHP investigates case of measles in institution

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (April 3) investigating a case of measles infection in an institution and reminded the public that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

The case involves a 46 year-old man with good past health, who has developed fever and headache since March 20 and was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital on March 22 for treatment. He developed rash since March 24.

A laboratory test of his blood specimen was positive for the measles virus. He is in a stable condition. The patient's measles vaccination history is unknown. He is the inmate of an institution in Sham Shui Po District. He had no travel history during the incubation period and the communicable period.

Upon notification of the case, officers of the CHP have initiated epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing immediately to identify other possible patients as soon as possible.

CHP staff visited the institution and has offered measles related health advice to the staff of the institution. To prevent possible spread of infection, measles mop-up vaccination has been offered to close contacts in the institution. All exposed contacts have remained asymptomatic so far and have been put under medical surveillance.

The CHP's investigation is continuing.

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. Members of the public who are planning to travel to places with a 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 a measles vaccination during childhood. Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, with unknown vaccination history or unknown immunity against measles, are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccinations at least two weeks before departure," the spokesman said.

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 a skin rash.

"The incubation period (the period from infection to appearance of illness) of measles ranges from seven days to 21 days. Symptoms of measles

include fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes. If symptoms arise, members of the public should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should also avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below 1. Those suspected to have been infected are advised to seek medical attention as early as possible and reveal relevant contact history of measles to healthcare professionals," the spokesman advised.

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

For more information on measles, the public may call the 24-hour health education hotline 2833 0111 or 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 the DH's [Travel Health Service](#).