

CHP investigates case of measles infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (May 31) investigating a case of measles infection.

The case involves a 30-year-old man with good past health, who has developed fever since May 26 and rash since May 29. He attended the Outpatient Department at Hong Kong Sanatorium and Hospital on May 29 and 30. He was then referred to the Accident and Emergency Department at Pok Oi Hospital on May 30 and was subsequently admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital for treatment.

A laboratory test of his respiratory specimen was positive for the measles virus. He has been in a stable condition all along. The patient's measles vaccination history is unknown. He travelled to Vietnam and the United States during the incubation period but had no travel history during the communicable period.

According to the patient, he did not have contact with measles patients during the incubation period. His home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far and have been put under medical surveillance.

Upon notification of the case, the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. Investigations are ongoing. The public places the patient visited during the communicable period are listed in the appendix.

A spokesman for the DH said, "Those who might have had contact with the patient during the period of communicability are urged to observe if they have developed measles-related symptoms, and to seek medical treatment immediately if such symptoms appear. If they need to visit any health care facilities during the period of medical surveillance, they should also report whether they have symptoms and prior measles exposure history to the healthcare workers so that appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at the healthcare facilities concerned to prevent any potential spread."

The spokesman explained that 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 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.