

CHP investigates five additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 10), the CHP is investigating five additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 121 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 120 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Two of the confirmed cases today are associated with a confirmed case in Canada earlier, being the case's household contacts in Hong Kong. The confirmed case in Canada was a member of the same tour group to India as the five patients of the 105th, 107th, 110th, 111th and 115th cases in Hong Kong.

The first case involves a 52-year-old woman (the 117th case) who is the daughter of the confirmed case in Canada. She has good past health and lives in Block 28, Lower Baguio Villa, 550 Victoria Road, Southern District. The other case involves a 48-year-old woman (the 118th case) who is the domestic helper of the 117th case who live together. The 48-year-old female patient has underlying illness. When arranging quarantine for the two patients yesterday (March 9), they were found to have fever and immediately sent to Queen Mary Hospital for treatment. The domestic helper reported to have developed cough with sputum and runny nose since March 4. Their respiratory samples were tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and they are now in stable condition. Both patients had no recent travel history.

The remaining three cases are related to members of a group tour from Hong Kong to Egypt from February 27 to March 7. One of the patients is a 59-year-old man (the 119th case) who is a staff member of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. The patient has good past health and lives in Heng Tai House, Fu Heng Estate in Tai Po. He developed cough on March 7, then fever on March 8 and sought treatment at Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital (AHNH). He also consulted a private doctor on March 9. His deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today. He was hospitalised for treatment at AHNH and is in stable condition. His wife who also joined the tour has developed symptoms and was admitted to AHNH for treatment while his son is asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The other two patients are a couple who live in On Hei House in Siu Hei Court, Tuen Mun. The 59-year-old man (the 120th case) with underlying illness developed runny nose since March 7 and fever since March 8 while his 59-year-old wife (the 121st case) with good past health developed fever since March 7. They sought treatment at Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) on March 9. Their deep throat saliva specimens were tested positive for COVID-19 today. They are under treatment at TMH and are in a stable condition.

The three patients from the same group tour took the flight TK695 (economy class cabin) by Turkish Airlines from Cairo in Egypt to Istanbul in

Turkey on March 6 and then departed Istanbul on flight TK70 (economy class cabin) by Turkish Airlines arriving Hong Kong on March 7. Passengers who travelled in the same cabin on board the flights are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. 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 the annex.

Meanwhile, the CHP is following up on the contact tracing of two confirmed cases outside Hong Kong. The first case involves a 19-year-old female patient in Dongguan, Guangdong who took the flight CX320 (economy class cabin) by Cathay Pacific from Madrid, Spain to Hong Kong arriving on March 8.

The second case involves a 31-year-old female patient who was a passenger on board the Diamond Princess cruise and became a confirmed patient in Japan. She was discharged after treatment in Japan and returned from Tokyo to Hong Kong on the flight NH811 (economy class cabin) by All Nippon Airways on March 7. While she remained asymptomatic, her respiratory specimen collected during a consultation for her underlying illness at Queen Mary Hospital on March 9 was tested positive for COVID-19.

People who travelled on the same cabin of the two above-mentioned flights are urged to call the CHP hotline.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP reminded members of the public that as the transmission of the COVID-19 virus has been increasing around the world, they are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong."

"Meanwhile, according to our epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in the local community involving large meal gatherings and other gatherings. Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

The spokesman said, "The CHP 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, and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps); 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."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province and the Hospital Authority.

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 30 947 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on the COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand 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;
- 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.

Members of the public are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. The public should take heed of the health advice below if it is unavoidable to travel outside Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province of the Mainland where there is

widespread community transmission of the COVID-19 virus;

- Avoid unnecessary travel to Korea (especially Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do where the majority of cases were reported), Iran, Italy, Bourgogne-Franche-Comte and Grand Est regions in France, the North Rhine-Westphalia region in Germany, Hokkaido in Japan as well as the La Rioja, Madrid and Pais Vasco regions in Spain;
- When travelling to countries/areas with active community transmission of COVID-19 virus, the public should avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms. 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.