

CHP investigates five additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has announced that as of 4pm today (April 13), the CHP was investigating five additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 1 010 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 009 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve three males and two females aged between one and 79. Among them, four had a 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.

The DH reminded inbound travellers that starting from April 8, all asymptomatic inbound travellers arriving at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) will be mandated under the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) to collect their deep throat saliva samples at the DH's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at the AsiaWorld-Expo for conducting testing for COVID-19. After collecting their deep throat saliva samples in accordance with the instructions and submit the samples to the DH personnel on duty at the venue, they have to go to their accommodation for the compulsory quarantine as soon as possible by their own means.

From April 9, asymptomatic inbound travellers arriving on flights from the UK are required to proceed to the DH's TSCC to collect their deep throat saliva samples and wait for the test results there. Starting today, the arrangement is extended to asymptomatic inbound travellers arriving on flights from the US and other areas in Europe.

As the testing takes time, the people concerned might need to stay at the venue to wait for 8 hours or more and those arriving at night might have to wait longer. The DH urged for the understanding and patience from inbound travellers on the arrangement. If the number of passengers on the flights from the above areas exceed the maximum capacity of TSCC, the passengers will be allowed to go home or a designated place after specimen collection for compulsory quarantine.

Meanwhile, starting on April 8, inbound travellers who have been to Hubei Province in the past 14 days arriving Hong Kong via land boundary control points (Shenzhen Bay Port and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port) are also provided with specimen collection containers for collecting their deep throat saliva samples for testing when they are undergoing compulsory home quarantine. They are required to collect their deep throat saliva sample by themselves at home in accordance with the instructions, and to have their family members or friends deliver it to any of the collection points in the same morning.

The collection points of the samples are 13 designated chest clinics or dermatological clinics under the DH from 9am to 11am on Monday to Sunday and also some general out-patient clinics under the Hospital Authority from 8.30am to 9.30am on Monday to Friday (except public holiday).

They can also make use of a door-to-door specimen collection service from two member companies under the Cyberport Startup Alumni Association, namely GoGo Tech Limited ("GOGO VAN") and HK PICK-UP LIMITED ("Pickupp"), to submit their deep throat saliva specimens to DH for COVID-19 testing. For service subscriptions and enquiries, please refer to the information below:

	GOGO VAN	Pickupp
Service Subscription	www.gogovan.com.hk/covid-19-testing-en/	hk.pickupp.io/en/blog/COVID-19-sample
General Enquiry	5681 4989 (hotline)	hk@pickupp.io

For more information about the service, please refer to the following link of the Cyberport Startup Alumni Association: www.csa.com.hk/blog/door-to-door-specimen-collection-service-new.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons, who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "In view of the proliferation of the disease and 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."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, the

National Health Commission, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 90 695 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 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 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 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 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.