

# CHP investigates imported case of Zika Virus Infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 17) investigating an imported case of Zika Virus Infection which is related to [an imported case announced earlier](#), and again urged the public to adopt strict anti-mosquito measures and safe sex during travel. Pregnant women should not travel to [areas with Zika virus transmission](#) (affected areas).

The case involves a 60-year-old female patient with good past health, who had developed skin rash and joint pain since November 12 and attended the Accident and Emergency Department (AED) of Caritas Medical Centre (CMC) on the same day. She attended the AED of CMC again on the next day (November 13) due to worsening symptoms and was admitted on the same day for management. She has been in stable condition all along. Her clinical specimen tested positive for Zika virus. Her home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far.

Epidemiological investigations of the CHP revealed that the patient, who was one of the travel collaterals of an imported case announced earlier, had also travelled to India on October 30 and returned to Hong Kong on November 12. She recalled mosquito bites during travel. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), India is recorded with previous Zika virus transmission.

The CHP has informed the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for vector surveillance and control. The CHP will also report the case to the WHO and the national, Guangdong and Macao health authorities. Letters have been issued to doctors and hospitals to alert them to the latest situation. Zika Virus Infection is a statutorily notifiable infectious disease in Hong Kong. Suspected or confirmed cases must be promptly notified for investigation, control and surveillance.

According to the WHO, multiple countries/areas in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia have recorded with current or previous Zika virus transmissions. The public should heighten their vigilance during travel. Doctors should stay alert to patients with compatible symptoms and travel history.

The CHP's Port Health Division (PHD) has been carrying out inspections and health promotions (including reminding travellers to adopt anti-mosquito measures when travelling) at boundary control points (BCPs) to maintain strict environmental hygiene with effective mosquito control, and keeping close contact with relevant stakeholders (e.g. airlines and the travel industry) to provide the latest disease information and health advice at appropriate times. Routine health surveillance on body temperature of inbound travellers at all BCPs is ongoing. However, infected persons are mainly asymptomatic. Therefore, those arriving from Zika-affected areas are urged to apply insect repellent for at least 21 days upon arrival to reduce the risk

of transmission.

A spokesman for the CHP said that Zika Virus Infection is a mosquito-borne disease caused by Zika virus. Zika virus is primarily transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected *Aedes mosquito*. *Aedes aegypti*, which is currently not found in Hong Kong, is considered the most important vector. Most people infected with Zika virus infection are asymptomatic. For patients with symptoms, they commonly present with rash, fever, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise and headache.

Zika Virus Infection during pregnancy is a cause of microcephaly and other congenital malformations in the infant, and it can also cause complications such as fetal loss, stillbirth and preterm birth.

Apart from [general measures on preventing mosquito bites and mosquito breeding](#), the public should take heed of special notes below:

#### A. Travelling abroad

- If going to affected areas, travellers, especially persons with immune disorders or severe chronic illnesses, should arrange a consultation with a doctor at least six weeks before the trip, and have extra preventive measures to avoid mosquito bites;
- During the trip, if travelling in rural affected areas, carry a portable bed net and apply permethrin (an insecticide) on it. Permethrin should not be applied to skin. Seek medical attention promptly if feeling unwell; and
- Travellers who return from affected areas should seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to a doctor if feeling unwell e.g. having fever.

#### B. Sexual transmission

- Travellers should consider not having sex during travel to affected areas, or else a condom should be used; and
- Male and female travellers returning from affected areas should abstain from sex for at least three months and at least two months respectively upon return, or else a condom should be used.

#### C. Pregnant women

- Pregnant women should not travel to affected areas. Women preparing for pregnancy should note Point B above. If they or their male sex partners plan to travel to affected areas, they should consult their doctors for advice on the risk. Use of mosquito repellent containing DEET during travel and returning from these areas for a period of at least 21 days are advised for all travellers including pregnant women;
- Attend antenatal follow up regularly and tell the attending doctor the history of recent travel;

- Observe for symptoms of Zika Virus Infection and seek medical advice as soon as possible if feeling unwell; and
- Abstain from sex with partner who had travelled to affected areas, or else a condom should be used throughout the pregnancy.

â€œâ€œThe public may visit the Zika pages of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#) for more information.