

CHP investigates local measles infection case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (January 5) investigating a local case of measles infection and reminded the public that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

The case involves a three-year-old boy with good past health. He had developed fever since December 22 last year and visited a private doctor on the same day and his condition improved. Later, he presented with cough, runny nose and rash. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Kwong Wah Hospital on December 28 and was admitted on the same day. He is in stable condition after treatment and was discharged on January 2.

His blood sample tested positive for immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibodies to measles virus upon laboratory testing. The patient has received measles vaccinations and had no travel history during the incubation period. His three household contacts are currently asymptomatic.

According to information provided by the family of the patient, he had travelled to the Mainland during the communicable period. He took a cross-boundary coach operated by "Trans-Island Chinalink" from Shanghai Street, Prince Edward, at around 10.35am on December 27 to Fuxiang Bay, Hengqin New District, Zhuhai. He returned to Hong Kong by taking the cross-boundary coach at about 5.50pm on December 28.

The CHP is carrying out contact tracing for the case. Measles is highly infectious and the transmission risk at crowded environment (such as transportation) is higher. Since there is no contact information of all passengers who took the relevant routes at the abovementioned period, the CHP has set up an enquiry hotline (2125 2374) and appealed to the relevant passengers to call the hotline. Officers of the CHP will assess their condition and offer suggestions. The hotline will operate from 9am to 1pm tomorrow (January 6) and on January 7, and from 9am to 5.30pm starting from January 8, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

Investigations are ongoing.

"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," a spokesman for the DH 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 spokesman advised, "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."

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 visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). Members of the public who are going to travel can visit the website of the DH's [Travel Health Service](#) for news of measles outbreaks outside Hong Kong.