

# CHP investigates local measles infection case and reminds public that vaccination is the most effective preventive measure

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (January 24) investigating a local case of measles infection and reminded the public that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

The case involves an 11-month-old boy with good past health. He had developed fever, cough, running nose, vomiting and diarrhea since January 13. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) on January 15 and 16. He developed rash on January 16 after admission to the paediatric ward of QEH on that day. He is in stable condition after treatment and was discharged on January 22.

His blood sample tested positive for immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibodies to measles virus upon laboratory testing. The patient has not received measles vaccinations and had no travel history during the incubation period. His three household contacts are currently asymptomatic.

"The global immunisation coverage rates have dropped since the COVID-19 pandemic. Many countries worldwide, including the United Kingdom and some European countries are facing a resurgence of measles outbreaks. In view of the continuous increase in measles cases in the European Region, the World Health Organization (WHO) has urged parents to bring their children to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent measles from spreading," a spokesman for the DH said.

The CHP reiterated that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. During the COVID-19 pandemic over the past three years, parents, schools and healthcare workers in Hong Kong continued to support childhood immunisations, striving to maintain the immunisation coverage rates at a high level. As revealed by the vaccination uptake of primary school students and the findings of the territory-wide immunisation surveys regularly conducted by the DH, the two-dose measles vaccination coverage has been consistently maintained at a high level, well above 95 per cent, and the local seroprevalence rates of measles virus antibodies reflect that most of the people in Hong Kong are immune to measles. On the whole, the information available indicates that the risk of large-scale outbreak is considered to be low in Hong Kong. However, it is possible for some not fully vaccinated people to get infected and transmit the measles virus to susceptible people (including children aged below one who are not due for the first dose of measles vaccine).

The spokesman reminded members of the public that delays in vaccination

will weaken the protection for children against measles, and parents are reminded to maintain up-to-date vaccination for their children for comprehensive and timely protection.

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.

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 one. 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.