

CHP investigates measles infection case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (December 3) investigating a case of measles infection and reminded the public that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

The case involves a 58-year-old man with good past health, who has developed fever, cough and runny nose since November 25 and rash on December 1. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department at the North Lantau Hospital on December 1 for medical attention and was admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital for treatment on the same day.

A laboratory test of his respiratory specimen was positive for the measles virus. He is in a stable condition and his measles vaccination history is unknown. He travelled to the Philippines during the incubation period but had no travel history during the communicable period.

According to the patient, he did not have contact with measles patients during the incubation period.

Upon notification of the case, the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. Investigations are ongoing. The public places the patient visited during the communicable period are listed in the appendix.

A spokesman for the DH said, "Those who might have had contact with the patient during the period of communicability are urged to observe if they have developed measles-related symptoms, and to seek medical treatment immediately if such symptoms appear. If they need to visit any health care facilities during the period of medical surveillance, they should also report whether they have symptoms and prior measles exposure history to the healthcare workers so that appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at the healthcare facilities concerned to prevent any potential spread.

"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," the spokesman said.

To boost the community's herd immunity against measles, the CHP earlier this year launched a one-off mop-up programme to provide free measles vaccinations to foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) working in Hong Kong. Eligible FDHs are urged to use the opportunity to receive measles

vaccinations to protect themselves, their families and their employers' families before the programme ends on February 15, 2020. For details and appointment methods, please visit the CHP's website www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102004.html.

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 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," the spokesman advised.

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 call the 24-hour health education hotline 2833 0111 or visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). For news of measles outbreaks outside Hong Kong or the latest travel health advice, please visit the website of the DH's [Travel Health Service](#).