

CHP investigates nine additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 16), the CHP is investigating nine additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 158 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 157 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The 150th case involves a 37-year-old man who has good past health. He developed fever since March 13, and cough and sore throat since March 14. He attended Yau Ma Tei Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic yesterday (March 15) and was transferred to Kwong Wah Hospital for treatment and admission. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today. He was further transferred to Queen Elizabeth Hospital and is now in stable condition. The patient travelled from Hong Kong to the Netherlands on February 28 for business trip, and then from Amsterdam by flight CX270 by Cathay Pacific arriving Hong Kong on March 15, and had been staying alone in Hotel ICON in Tsim Sha Tsui East upon arrival. Passengers who travelled on board the flight are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The 151st case involves a 30-year-old male tourist. He developed cough since March 8 and attended Queen Elizabeth Hospital yesterday where he was admitted for treatment. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and he is now in stable condition. The patient had travelled to Dubai, United Arab Emirates between February 25 and March 10. He took the flight EK380 by Emirates from Dubai arriving Hong Kong on the same day, and had been staying alone in Whole Sunshine International Hotel in Tsim Sha Tsui upon arrival. Passengers who travelled in on board the flight are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The 152nd case involves a 73-year-old man with good past health, who lives at Tower 1, Oceania Heights, Tuen Mun. He developed headache since March 13, followed by fever and cough since March 14. He attended Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) on March 15 and was admitted for treatment. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and is now in stable condition. The patient joined a group tour from Hong Kong to Egypt between March 5 and 13. He took the flight MS960 (economy class cabin) by EgyptAir from Cairo in Egypt to Bangkok in Thailand on March 13, and then from Bangkok by the same flight arriving Hong Kong on March 14. Passengers who travelled in the same cabin on board the flight are urged to call the CHP hotline. His wife who lives with him developed cough on March 13 and was admitted to TMH for treatment on March 15. She was tested preliminarily negative for COVID-19 virus. His domestic helper will be arranged for quarantine.

Two of the confirmed cases (the 153rd and 155th cases) today are associated with the 35-year-old male patient of the 143rd case confirmed yesterday. The 153rd case involves a 26-year-old woman who is the girl-friend of the patient of the 143rd case. Both travelled to Hokkaido, Japan between February 26 and March 11, and visited a clinic in Niseko, Hokkaido on March

7. The patient has good past health and lives alone in Pristine Villa, Tai Wai. She developed headache on March 15 and was admitted to the Prince of Wales Hospital for treatment during contact tracing by CHP on the same day. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and she is now in a stable condition. The patient took the flight JL2504 (economy class cabin) by The Japan Airlines from Hokkaido to Osaka on March 11 and then departed Osaka on flight CX561 (economy class cabin) by Cathay Pacific arriving Hong Kong on the same night. Passengers who travelled in the same cabin on board the two flights are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The 155th case involves a 58-year-old man who is the driver of the patient of the 143rd case. The patient has good past health and lives in Lung Chu House, Lung Poon Court, Diamond Hill. He had subjective fever on March 15 and was admitted to the North District Hospital for treatment during contact tracing by CHP on the same day. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and he is now in a stable condition. The patient had no recent travel history. His wife and daughter who live with them are symptomatic and will be admitted to hospital. Two taxi drivers who drove the patient from his home to Wah Ming Estate (around 4 pm) and from Wah Ming Estate to North District Hospital (around 5-6pm) respectively on March 15 are urged to call the CHP hotline. Relevant contact tracing is ongoing.

The 154th case involves a 42-year-old woman who has good past health and lives in 8 Hok Ling Street, Ma Tau Kok. She developed malaise on March 11, myalgia since March 12 and cough since March 13. She attended Queen Elizabeth Hospital yesterday and was admitted for treatment. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and she is now in a stable condition. The patient travelled to Britain, Germany and Austria between March 7 and March 14. She travelled to Munich from Austria by car on March 13 and took the flight BA0953 by British Airways to London, then departed London on flight BA0027 by British Airways, arriving Hong Kong on March 14. Passengers who travelled on board the related flights are urged to call the CHP hotline. Her husband and daughter who live with her are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The 156th case involves a 59-year-old man who has good past health. He developed fever, cough and sore throat since March 9 and attended Queen Mary Hospital on March 15 where he was admitted for treatment. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and he is now in stable condition. The patient visited Switzerland on January 20 and then travelled to Austria on February 28 before returning to Switzerland on March 6. He took a flight from Switzerland arriving Hong Kong on March 12, and had been staying alone in Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong upon arrival.

The remaining two cases are related, involving a 42-year-old woman (the 157th case) and 41-year-old woman (the 158th case). Both with good past health, the two patients live at Block 16, Mayfair By The Sea, Tai Po. The 42-year-old female patient developed cough and shortness of breath since March 15. She attended Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (PYNEH) on the same day and was admitted for treatment. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and is now in stable condition. The 41-year-old female patient who is regarded as a close contact was arranged

for testing. Her respiratory sample was also tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and she was admitted to PYNEH for treatment. Both patients are in a stable condition.

The two patients had travelled to Vancouver and Whistler in Canada between March 6 and 14. They took the flight CX837 (business class cabin) by Cathay Pacific from Vancouver on March 14 and arrived Hong Kong on March 15. Passengers who travelled in the same cabin on board the flight are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. Quarantine will be arranged for close contacts while medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts. For the progress on the contact tracing of the cases, please see the annex.

The CHP is following up on the contact tracing of a confirmed case outside Hong Kong. The case involves a 51-year old male patient confirmed in Guangdong who took the flight CX902 (business class cabin) from Manila to Hong Kong arriving on March 13. People who took the same flight are urged to call the CHP hotline.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "In view of 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. If it is unavoidable to travel to countries/areas outside Hong Kong, they should put on a surgical mask and continue to do so for 14 days upon their return to Hong Kong."

"Meanwhile, according to our epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in the local community involving large meal gatherings and other gatherings. Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

The spokesman said, "The CHP 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, and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps); 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, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) for public enquiries. The hotline operates from 8am to midnight daily. As at 4pm today, a total of 35 581 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 the 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 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 liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) 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.