

CHP investigates nine confirmed and 17 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and provides update on cases related to Moon Palace

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 2) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 2, the CHP was investigating nine additional confirmed cases and 17 additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 26 additional cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch in that 24 hours), taking the number of confirmed cases to 12 664 so far and starting from January 1 recorded 29 asymptomatic cases. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 12 693 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of 25 imported cases and one possibly import-related case. Twenty-four of the cases involved mutant strains while mutation test results of the remaining two cases are pending. The patients comprise seven males and 19 females, aged one to 61. Among the imported cases, nine of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance and 16 from Group A specified places (high-risk); twelve patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport and 10 tested positive during quarantine. Case 12674 and 12677 are close contacts of two previously confirmed imported cases 12576 and 12640 respectively. They tested positive respectively at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre (PBQC) and a hospital. The remaining imported case (12676) involves a local aircrew member. She developed symptoms on December 29. She consulted a private doctor on December 30 and tested positive. The CHP has announced the case details yesterday (January 1) (<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202201/01/P2022010100594.htm>).

Among the above-mentioned imported cases, case 12682 had stayed in Hong Kong during the incubation period, which involves a 27-year-old female patient living at Kornhill Block K, Quarry Bay. She departed Hong Kong on December 24 for Finland after she tested negative on December 23. She arrived in Hong Kong on December 31 from Finland via the Netherlands and Thailand by flight KL819, and her specimen collected upon arrival at the TSCC tested positive carrying the N501Y and T478K mutant strains. The places where she resided and visited in Hong Kong during the incubation period have been included in a compulsory testing notice (CTN).

Case 12673 is a possibly import-related case involving a 50-year-old female who patronised Moon Palace at Festival Walk from around 12 noon to 2pm on December 27. She was arranged to quarantine at the PBQC on December 31 and her specimen collected on the same day tested positive. The case details have been announced yesterday

(<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202201/01/P2022010100617.htm>). Together with this case, there are so far four cases tested positive related to Moon Palace.

Meanwhile, the CHP is investigating another case tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus which is related to the Moon Palace. It involves a 38-year-old female who is the wife of case 12654 (a construction worker) and had meal together at Moon Palace from around 2.30pm to 4pm on December 27. She went to a community testing centre for test in accordance with the relevant requirement of the CTN on December 29 and tested negative. She was classified as a household close contact and was arranged to conduct quarantine at PBQC on December 30. She developed sore throat on January 1 and her specimen collected today tested preliminarily positive with a Ct value larger than 30. The test results on mutant strains are pending. The patient received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comiraty) on June 19 and July 16 in Hong Kong. She works at 15/F, Sandoz Centre, 178-182 Texaco Road, Tsuen Wan where she last went to work on December 30. The places where she worked and visited during the incubation period will be included in a CTN.

With regard to cases related to Moon Palace, the CHP has so far arranged about 340 close contacts and household contacts of the close contacts to undergo quarantine at quarantine centre, including 22 staff members of the restaurant and about 170 customers who patronised that restaurant at the same period of time. The CHP appeals again to people who had meals at Moon Palace from 1pm to 3pm on December 27 to call the CHP's hotlines at 2125 1111 or 2125 1122 as soon as possible to facilitate the CHP's epidemiological investigations and contact tracing.

A total of 148 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (December 19 to January 1, 2022). Four of them are import-related cases, while the rest are imported cases.

Also, as the passenger flight (KL819) operated by KLM Royal Dutch Airlines arriving in Hong Kong from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on December 31, 2021 had six passengers who tested positive upon arrival, and the passenger flight (CX216) operated by Cathay Pacific arriving in Hong Kong from Manchester, the United Kingdom, on January 1, 2022 had three passengers who tested positive upon arrival, the DH thus invoked the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to prohibit the landing of passenger flights in Hong Kong from Amsterdam operated by KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and from Manchester operated by Cathay Pacific from January 2 to 15, 2022.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf).

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are also reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the CTN tomorrow (January 3):

- 36B Tai Mei Tuk Village (except G/F), Tai Po
- Tower 3, The Visionary, 1 Ying Hong Street, Tung Chung
- Tower 7, Park Avenue, 18 Hoi Ting Road, Tai Kok Tsui
- One South Lane, No.1 South Lane, Shek Tong Tsui
- Twilight Court, Peninsula Village, 2 Caperidge Drive, Discovery Bay, Lantau Island
- Tower 1, The SeaCrest, 1 Hang Kwai Street, Tuen Mun
- Tower 6, The Belcher's, 89 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam
- Block 1, Kwun Lung Lau, 20 Lung Wah Street, Kennedy Town
- Wing Chak House, Chak On Estate, Chak On Road, Shek Kip Mei
- 135 Tuen Tsz Wai, Tuen Mun
- Block A, Hoi Tao Building, 11 Belcher's Street, Kennedy Town
- Grandeur Terrace Block 2, 88 Tin Shui Road, Tin Shui Wai
- Tower 6, Albany Cove, Caribbean Coast Phase II, 1 Kin Tung Road, Tung Chung (excluding the Greenfield English (International) Kindergarten (Tung Chung) located on the ground floor of Tower 6, Albany Cove, Caribbean Coast Phase II and Tower 7, Albany Cove, Caribbean Coast)
- Nam Tin Building, 275 King's Road, North Point (excluding the restaurant located on L1 floor and L2 floor of Nam Tin Building)
- Block 6, Villa Athena, 600 Sai Sha Road, Ma On Shan

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the reported cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

The spokesman for the CHP stressed, "The global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility, and there are also reports of breakthrough infections in some vaccinated individuals. The CHP strongly urges members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H)."