

CHP investigates one additional confirmed case of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, July 16, the CHP was investigating one additional confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 957 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 956 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported case is an imported case.

Meanwhile, the CHP is investigating an overseas case with a suspected re-positive testing result. The case involves a 32-year-old male patient, who is a sea crew member who arrived in Hong Kong by flight from India on July 13. His specimen collected upon arrival in the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at Hong Kong International Airport tested negative for COVID-19. He remained asymptomatic and stayed in a cargo vessel all along after arrival. His specimen collected on the next day (July 14) tested positive for COVID-19 and carried the L452R mutant strain (but was negative for the N501Y and E484K strains). Initial investigations of the CHP revealed that the patient had been diagnosed with COVID-19 in India in May this year and he has not received COVID-19 vaccination. After admission to hospital on July 15, the patient tested positive for antibody against SARS-CoV-2. After examining the epidemiological, clinical and laboratory findings, this case is compatible with a re-positive case. For prudence's sake, all relevant sea crew members in the vessel will be quarantined on board for 21 days. Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the case are ongoing. Moreover, the patient's workplace (the vessel Maersk Lima at the Kwai Tsing Container Terminals) will be included in a compulsory testing notice (CTN) today. Specified persons who had been present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before the specified date.

Separately, according to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local COVID-19 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 days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day. Relevant deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises are listed on the Government's website

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 (July 17):

– 1-3 Kam Fung Street, Wong Tai Sin

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on

the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to CTNs. The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to CTNs published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop, and undergo testing as soon as possible.

The CHP strongly urged members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places of extremely high risk and very high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H). If unavoidable, the CHP highly recommended the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure with a view to lowering their chances of being infected with COVID-19 overseas. They should continue to wear a surgical mask and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times. Parents are also urged to avoid taking unvaccinated children to travel. The spokesman 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. Members of the public must seriously evaluate the risk of non-essential travel."

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

"The CHP also 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. Moreover, vaccination may help keep people from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19, and, generally speaking, vaccines can also reduce the chance of transmission by those who have been vaccinated. People vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine can

also generate herd immunity. Members of the public are urged to get vaccinated as soon as possible and book their vaccination appointments at the website (booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/index.jsp).

"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). After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs," the spokesman said.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, 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 performing 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 doorknobs, 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 litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- 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.