

CHP investigates one additional confirmed case of COVID-19 and amends case classification

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, June 29, the CHP was investigating one additional confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 922 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 921 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported case is an imported case.

The CHP announced on June 25 that the genetic sequencing for case 11902, which involved the L452R mutant strain, was found to be identical to the genomes of three previous imported cases (cases 11877, 11878 and 11881) by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, suggesting that the four cases might be epidemiologically linked. The CHP's latest epidemiological investigations revealed that case 11902 had brief encounters with the three imported cases at the DH's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre in the Hong Kong International Airport on June 11. Taking into consideration the epidemiological information and genetic sequencing findings, the CHP has today (June 29) amended the classification of case 11902 from a local case with unknown sources to epidemiologically linked with imported cases. Hence, case 11918, which is epidemiologically linked with case 11902, will also be reclassified as a case with epidemiological linkage with an imported case. (Please refer to the Annex for details of updated cases).

A total of 42 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (June 15 to 28) including 40 imported cases and two import-related cases.

Separately, subsequent to the announcement by the CHP on the updated 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. A compulsory testing notice (CTN) was issued on May 7 (www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/202125151e/egn202125151354.pdf). They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day.

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the CTN tomorrow (June 30):

– Wan Hang House, Wan Tau Tong Estate, Tai Po.

Members of the public can check the deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises as stipulated in the aforementioned CTN on the Government's website (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf).

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 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 spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases including mutant strains reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"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."

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.