

CHP investigates six additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (February 26), the CHP is investigating six additional cases of COVID-19, taking the number of confirmed cases to 91 in Hong Kong so far.

Three of the confirmed cases today are associated with the cluster related to a Buddhist temple named Fook Wai Ching She. One of the patients involves a 49-year-old woman (the 86th case) with good past health who lives in Block B, Healthy Gardens, 560 King's Road, North Point. She developed cough with sputum and sore throat since February 18. She called the CHP hotline and was arranged to be taken to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (PYNEH) by ambulance on February 22. She was admitted to the hospital for treatment on February 23. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus and is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period. Her husband and son who live with her are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

Another patient is an 80-year-old male (the 89th case) who is the husband of the 74th case confirmed on February 23. The patient has underlying illness who lives in Maylun Apartments, 1-25 Shu Kuk Street, North Point. The patient developed fever and cough yesterday (February 25) and was admitted to PYNEH for treatment on the same day. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus and is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period and did not visit Fook Wai Ching She. His daughter who lives with him and presented with symptoms was transferred to PYNEH for treatment while his grand-daughter and domestic helper are asymptomatic and have been arranged for quarantine.

The third case involves a 26-year-old male (the 91st case) who is the son of the 76th case confirmed on February 24. The patient has good past health who lives in Phase 1 of Redhill Peninsula in Tai Tam. He developed fever and cough since February 20 and sought medical advice at the Outpatient Department at the Hong Kong Sanatorium and Hospital on February 21. He attended Ruttonjee Hospital (RH) and was admitted for treatment on February 24. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus and is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period and did not visit Fook Wai Ching She. His father, second brother and domestic helper who live with him are all asymptomatic and have been arranged for quarantine.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations revealed that the 86th, 89th and 91st cases together with the patients of the 65th, 70th, 73rd, 74th, 76th, 77th and 83rd cases announced earlier (10 patients in total) had all visited Fook Wai Ching She in Maylun Apartments in January or February or had association with confirmed cases who had been to the temple. Those who also

had visited the temple during the above period and developed relevant symptoms later, are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The other two confirmed cases involve two passengers of Diamond Princess cruise, namely a 21-year-old woman (the 87th case) and her 16-year-old brother (the 88th case). Both with good past health, the two patients stayed on the cruise from January 25 to February 22, and returned to Hong Kong by a chartered flight arranged by the Hong Kong Government on February 23. Their samples were preliminary tested positive for COVID-19 virus, hence they were transferred from Chun Yeung Estate Quarantine camp to Queen Mary Hospital for further treatment yesterday. Their respiratory samples were tested positive for COVID-19 virus by further testing today. They are now in a stable condition. The patient of the 87th case had fever on February 12 while the patient of the 88th case had on and off runny nose since February 17. Regarding other relatives who travelled with them on the cruise, their parents and maternal grandfather were confirmed cases diagnosed in Japan and are currently staying in Japan for treatment, while their younger sister has no symptoms and is currently under quarantine in Chun Yeung Estate Quarantine camp.

The sixth case involves a 29-year-old female (the 90th case) who is the domestic helper of the 85th case confirmed yesterday. The patient has good past health who lives at Block 4, Swiss Towers at 113 Tai Hang Road, Tai Hang. She developed fever on February 16 and consulted the same private doctor on February 20 and 24. She was arranged to be admitted to RH by the CHP yesterday. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus and is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period. Her employer's husband and son, as well as another domestic helper are all asymptomatic and have been arranged for quarantine.

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 annex.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "According to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in 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 meals gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

The spokesman said, "The CHP strongly urged 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 the 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); 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, Japan health authority, Health Commission of Guangdong Province, Health Bureau of Macao 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 21 818 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public grasp 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;
- 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.

The public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province of Mainland where there is widespread community transmission of COVID-19 virus;
- Avoid unnecessary travel to Korea (especially Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do

where the majority of the cases were reported);

- When travelling to countries/areas with active community transmission of COVID-19 virus, the public should avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms. If it is unavoidable to come into contact with them, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene;
- Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry/birds or their droppings;
- Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- Do not consume game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served;
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
- If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if experiencing a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and
- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.