

CHP investigates suspected imported case of measles infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (December 17) investigating a suspected imported case of measles infection and reminded the public that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

The case involves a 41-year-old man with good past health. He developed fever and skin rash. He attended the Emergency Medicine Centre of Union Hospital on December 10 and was admitted for treatment. His respiratory samples tested positive for the measles virus upon nucleic acid testing. He is in a stable condition.

The patient did not have contact with measles patients in Hong Kong, and travelled to Japan during the incubation period. The case has been identified as a suspected imported case.

Upon notification of the case, the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigations. According to information provided by the patient, he played football with other people at the Artificial Football Pitch of Wong Chuk Hang Sports Centre on No.168, Wong Chuk Hang Road, Aberdeen between 7pm and 8pm on December 8. Since the patient does not have the contact information of all participants of the football activity, the CHP has set up an enquiry hotline (2125 2670) and appealed to persons who participated in the football activity at the above-mentioned venue to call the hotline. Officers of the CHP will assess their condition and offer suggestions. The hotline operates from Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) from 9am to 5.30pm, starting tomorrow (December 18).

The CHP has conducted the contact tracing at other locations during the communicable period of the case. Forty-nine contacts have been traced. All of them have remained asymptomatic so far. The CHP provided health and medical surveillance advice to the contacts. Epidemiological investigation is ongoing.

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. Members of the public who are planning to travel to places with a high incidence or outbreaks of measles should review their vaccination history and past medical history, especially people born outside Hong Kong who might not have received a measles vaccination during childhood. Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, with unknown vaccination history or unknown immunity against measles, are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccinations at least two weeks before departure," a spokesman for the DH said.

Measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled

with nose and throat secretions. A patient can pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of a skin rash.

The spokesman advised, "The incubation period (the period from infection to appearance of illness) of measles ranges from seven days to 21 days. Symptoms of measles include fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes. If symptoms arise, members of the public should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should also avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below 1. Those suspected to have been infected are advised to seek medical attention as early as possible and reveal relevant contact history of measles to healthcare professionals."

Besides being vaccinated against measles, members of the public should take the following measures to prevent infection:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- Clean used toys and furniture properly; and
- Persons with measles should be kept out of school till four days from the appearance of a rash to prevent the spread of the infection to non-immune persons in school.

For more information on measles, the public may visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). Members of the public who are going to travel can visit the website of the DH's [Travel Health Service](#) for news of measles outbreaks outside Hong Kong.