

CHP investigates three additional cases and two probable cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 1), the CHP is investigating three additional confirmed cases and two probable cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 100 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 98 confirmed cases and two probable cases).

The two probable cases involve two passengers of Diamond Princess cruise, namely a 68-year-old woman (the 96th case) with underlying illness and a 56-year-old man (the 97th case) with good past health. The two patients stayed on the cruise from January 25 to February 21, and returned to Hong Kong by the second chartered flight arranged by the Hong Kong Government on February 22. Their blood samples were tested positive for COVID-19 antibody, hence they were transferred from Chun Yeung Estate quarantine camp to the Queen Mary Hospital for further management. They are now in a stable condition.

The patient of the 96th case had fever between February 16 and 17 and had cough since February 27. The patient of the 97th case remained asymptomatic.

One of the confirmed cases is associated with the cluster related to a Buddhist temple named Fook Wai Ching She. The patient is a 71-year-old woman (the 98th case) with underlying illnesses who lives in Hong Shui Court, Lam Tin. She developed cough and runny nose since February 12 and consulted a Chinese medical practitioner on February 14, 25 and 26. She called the CHP hotline on February 29 and was arranged to be taken to United Christian Hospital for treatment. 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 son, daughter-in-law and grandson who live with her are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations revealed that the 98th case together with the patients of the 64th, 65th, 70th, 73rd, 74th, 76th, 77th, 83rd, 84th, 86th, 89th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd and 95th cases announced earlier (16 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. People who had visited the temple on January 25 onwards are again urged to call the CHP hotline and those who developed relevant symptoms will be arranged to hospitals for treatment.

The other two confirmed cases involve a couple who are a 76-year-old woman (the 99th case) and a 79-year-old man (the 100th case) with underlying illnesses. They live in Un Lok House, Un Chau Estate, Sham Shui Po. The female patient developed fever, shortness of breath, cough and abdominal pain

since February 28. She sought medical attention at Caritas Medical Centre where she was admitted for treatment on the same day. The male patient developed fever and cough since February 28. He sought medical attention at Caritas Medical Centre on February 29 and was admitted for treatment. Their respiratory samples were tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and are now in stable condition. They had no travel history during the incubation period.

The CHP today received notification from the Health Commission of Guangdong Province of a confirmed case in the Mainland which involves a male patient. He took the flight CX250 by Cathay Pacific in business cabin from London arriving Hong Kong on February 28, and took the passenger vessel 3A109 by Chu Kong Shipping Enterprises from the SkyPier to Shekou in Guangdong at around 3.30pm on the same day. People who took the same flight in business cabin or the same passenger vessel are urged to call the CHP hotline.

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, Health Commission of Guangdong Province 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 24 916 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); Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy which cover Bologna, Milan, Venice and Verona, as well as Iran;
- 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.