

CHP investigates three additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 6), the CHP is investigating three additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 108 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 107 confirmed cases and one probable case).

One of the confirmed cases involves a 56-year-old man (the 106th case). The patient, with long term illness, lives in Block A, Po Shan Mansion on 14-16 Po Shan Road, Mid-levels. He developed fever, headache and myalgia since March 4. He attended Canossa Hospital yesterday (March 5) and then attended Ruttonjee Hospital where he was admitted for treatment. His respiratory sample tested positive for COVID-19 virus and he is now in a stable condition.

The patient travelled to the United States and Mexico from February 2 to 20 and to London and Paris from February 25 to March 3. His wife developed fever since March 2 and is now admitted to Ruttonjee Hospital for treatment. Her respiratory sample tested negative for COVID-19 virus. The patient's other household contacts, namely his two daughters, two domestic helpers and a driver, are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The patient took the flight BA323 (Business class cabin) by British Airways from Paris to London on March 3 and then BA27 (Business class cabin) by British Airways from London arriving Hong Kong on March 4. Passengers who travelled in the same cabin on board the two flights are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The other two cases are related to the 105th case confirmed on March 4. One of the cases involves an 84-year-old man (the 107th case) who joined the same tour to India from January 31 to February 24 with the 69-year-old female patient of the 105th case. The patient has good past health and lives in Scenic Villas, Southern District. He developed cough with sputum since February 28 and attended the University Health Service, the University of Hong Kong on February 29. He was identified and sent to Queen Mary Hospital for treatment by the CHP during contact tracing yesterday. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and he is now in a stable condition. His wife and domestic helper who live with him are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The patient took the flight CX694 by Cathay Pacific from New Delhi, India to Hong Kong and arrived on February 24. Passengers on board the same flight are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The other case involves a 69 year-old man (the 108th case) who is the husband of the patient of the 105th case. The patient, with underlying illnesses, lives in Landwood Court, Villa Lotto, Happy Valley. He did not travel to India and had no recent travel history. He was asymptomatic and

sent to the quarantine centre as a close contact yesterday. His deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and was arranged to Queen Mary Hospital for management. He is now in a stable condition. The domestic helper who lives with him is asymptomatic and quarantined.

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.

Meanwhile, the CHP is following up on the contact tracing of two overseas cases. The first one is a confirmed case in Thailand in which a male patient took the flight CX250 (First class cabin) by Cathay Pacific from London arriving Hong Kong on February 29, and took the flight CX617 (Business class cabin) by Cathay Pacific from Hong Kong to Bangkok on the same day. People who travelled on the same cabin of the two flights are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The second case is confirmed in Canada involving a female patient who took the flight CX838 by Cathay Pacific from Hong Kong to Vancouver on February 29. People who took the same flight are urged to call the CHP hotline.

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); cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use; 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 28 521 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;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- 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 CHP reminded members of the public that as the transmission of COVID-19 virus has been increasing around the world, they are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. 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.