

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 (February 19), the CHP is investigating three additional cases of COVID-19, taking to 65 the number of confirmed cases so far in Hong Kong.

The first case involves an 83-year-old woman (the 63rd case) who is the mother-in-law of the 54-year-old male patient of the 57th case confirmed on February 16 and the mother of the 46-year-old female patient of the 60th case confirmed on February 17. The patient has underlying illnesses who lives in Block 1, Seaview Garden in Tuen Mun. She developed runny nose since February 14. She suffered from fractures caused by fall on February 15 and was admitted to the Orthopaedic ward of Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) for treatment. She underwent surgery on February 16. Healthcare staff of TMH later acknowledged that the patient's daughter and son-in-law were confirmed cases of COVID-19. She was subsequently transferred to isolation ward of the hospital yesterday and received testing for COVID-19.

Her respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus and is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period. Her husband who lived with her had cough since January 25 and had recovered. He is currently asymptomatic and has been admitted to TMH isolation ward for further examination.

The patient visited the Hoi Tin Garden Restaurant on its first floor located on 5 Sam Shing Street, Tuen Mun from 9am to 11am on February 14 for a meal. Those who also visited the first floor of Hoi Tin Garden Restaurant during the above period and develop symptoms later are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The second and third cases involve a couple who are a 68-year-old man (the 64th case) and a 70-year-old woman (the 65th case) with underlying illnesses. They live in Sui Moon House, Siu Sai Wan Estate. They developed cough since February 12 and consulted a private doctor for persistent cough on February 18, and sought medical attention at Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital and were admitted for treatment. Their respiratory samples were tested positive for novel coronavirus and are now in stable condition. They had no travel history during the incubation period. Their daughter who live together is asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

Relevant contact tracing by the CHP is ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "According to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, some of the confirmed cases are locally infected. 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."

The spokesman said, "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. The public should go out less and reduce social activities, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

"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'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.

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 16 698 calls were received.

A dedicated webpage (www.gov.hk/ncv) has been set up by the CHP. Information including the latest local situation, list of buildings and list of flights/trains/ships relevant to the confirmed cases, countries/areas with reported cases as well as health advice and a local situation interactive map dashboard are available on the webpage 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 where community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring;
- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible community transmission of COVID-19. 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.