

CHP investigates three additional cases of novel coronavirus infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (February 6), the CHP is investigating three additional cases of novel coronavirus infection, taking to 24 the number of confirmed cases so far in Hong Kong.

The first additional case involves a 55-year-old woman with good past health who is the wife of the patient of the 21st confirmed case. She developed sore throat since February 1 and then fever and diarrhoea since February 2. She consulted a private doctor on February 2 and sought treatment at Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) on February 4. She attended PMH again on the following day and was admitted for isolation and management. Her respiratory samples were tested positive for novel coronavirus. She is in stable condition.

The CHP has immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. According to the patient's information, she works in Dongguan and returns to Hong Kong and resides in Block 1, Villa Esplanada in Tsing Yi during weekends. She came back to Hong Kong from Dongguan on January 17, and visited Tokyo in Japan with her husband from January 28 to February 1, arriving Hong Kong on February 2. Quarantine will be arranged for her other home contacts, namely her parents-in-law and domestic helper, who are asymptomatic.

The patient took a flight from Hong Kong to Tokyo on January 28 and returned from Tokyo to Hong Kong on U0651 by Hong Kong Express Airways on February 1. Passengers on board the returning flight concerned and the taxi driver who drove the patient and her husband from the Hong Kong International Airport to their home in Villa Esplanada, Tsing Yi at around 1am on February 2, the taxi driver who drove the patient from PMH to her home at around 1pm on February 4, as well as the taxi driver who drove her from her home to PMH at around 3pm on February 5, are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The second additional case involves a 63-year-old woman with good past health, who developed cough and malaise since January 26. The patient later consulted a Chinese medicine practitioner. She consulted a private doctor on February 5 and sought treatment at Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital where she was admitted for management on the same day. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus. She is in stable condition.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the patient resides in Ko Mong Building, 142-146 Shau Kei Wan Road. She visited her husband who lives in Lai To Home For The Aged in Sai Wan Ho during the incubation period and after onset of symptoms. She had no travel history during the period. Her husband, as well as her son and granddaughter who live with her, are asymptomatic and quarantine will be arranged for them.

The third additional case involves a 65-year-old woman with underlying illnesses. She developed fever and cough since January 28. She consulted a private doctor on January 29 and February 1, and sought treatment from the Prince of Wales Hospital (PWH) on February 5 where she was admitted for management. Her respiratory samples were tested positive for novel coronavirus. She is in serious condition.

Preliminary investigations revealed that she lives alone in Sui Shek House in Shek Mun Estate, Sha Tin and had no travel history during the incubation period. The taxi driver who drove the patient from the Hilton Plaza in Sha Tin to PWH at around 12.15pm to 1pm on February 5 is urged to call the CHP hotline.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "According to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, some of the confirmed cases are believed to be 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, Health Bureau of Macao and the health authority of Japan.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. The CHP is also closely monitoring and following up on the contact tracing of relevant confirmed cases in the Mainland and overseas. 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 5 762 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 "Novel Coronavirus Infection Local Situation Interactive Map Dashboard" are available on the webpage to help the public grasp the latest updates.

Hong Kong residents returning from the Mainland should take note of the following health advice:

- Members of the public returning to Hong Kong from the Mainland should stay home as far as possible if circumstances allow. Those who need to go out should wear a surgical mask for 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Hong Kong residents who have visited Hubei Province in the past 14 days should wear a surgical mask immediately and approach staff of the DH's Port Health Division upon arrival. They will be quarantined for observation after a health assessment.
- Hong Kong residents who had been to Hubei Province in the past 14 days but have already returned to Hong Kong should wear a surgical mask immediately and call the CHP hotline for arrangement to be quarantined for observation.

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 novel coronavirus is occurring;

- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible community transmission of novel coronavirus infection. 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.