

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 17), the CHP is investigating three additional cases of novel coronavirus infection, taking to 60 the number of confirmed cases so far in Hong Kong.

The first case involves a 69-year-old man (the 58th case) with underlying illnesses who lives in Yee Ching House, Yee Ming Estate, Tseung Kwan O. He developed cough on February 8 and consulted a private doctor three times between February 8 and 13. He sought medical attention at Cheung Sha Wan Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic for persistent cough on February 15. He consulted the same private doctor again yesterday (February 16) for shortness of breath and was referred to Caritas Medical Centre and admitted for medical treatment. His respiratory samples were tested positive for novel coronavirus and he is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period. His home contact is asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The second case involves a 45-year-old man (the 59th case) who is the colleague of the 54-year-old male patient of the 57th case confirmed yesterday. The patient has good past health who lives in Oi Wah House, Tsz Oi Court, Tsz Wan Shan. He developed fever and sore throat since February 12 and consulted a private doctor on February 13. He sought medical attention at Queen Elizabeth Hospital yesterday and was admitted for treatment. His respiratory samples were tested positive for novel coronavirus and he is now in a stable condition. The patient travelled to Da Nang, Vietnam during the incubation period (from January 30 to February 1). The patient lives with his wife and three daughters, who are all asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The third case involves a 46-year-old woman (the 60th case) who is the wife of the 57th case confirmed yesterday. The patient has good past health who lives in Ming Kung Mansion, Taikoo Shing. She developed runny nose since February 8 and cough since February 10. She consulted a private doctor on February 10 and was referred to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital for admission and treatment by the CHP yesterday. Her respiratory samples were tested positive for novel coronavirus and she is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period. According to the patient, she attended a church activity at a church in Shau Kei Wan with her husband on February 9.

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 case to the World Health Organization, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province and Health Bureau of Macao.

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 15 130 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.

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.