

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 yesterday (February 4), the CHP is investigating three additional cases of novel coronavirus infection, taking to 18 the number of confirmed cases so far in Hong Kong.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "According to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, the three additional confirmed cases will be classified as local infection cases. 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 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 first additional case involves a 64-year-old woman with good past health. She lives in Celestial Heights, Sheung Shing Street, Kowloon. She presented with cough since January 23 and consulted a private doctor. She then developed fever on January 30 and consulted another private doctor. She had shortness of breath on February 1 and sought treatment at Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) where she was admitted for management. The patient was transferred to Princess Margaret Hospital for further management on February 3. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus. She is now in critical condition.

The CHP has immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. According to the information from patient's son, she had no travel history during the incubation period and mainly travelled between her home and her shop in Prudential Centre in Jordan. Her household contacts, namely her son, daughter-in-law, two grandchildren and a domestic helper, are asymptomatic and will be sent to a quarantine centre for quarantine.

Those who had visited the patient's shop named "Fresh Up" in Prudential Centre from January 23 to February 1, and the taxi driver who had driven the patient and her son from their home to QEH at around 11am on February 1 are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The second case involves a 60-year-old man with underlying illness who resides in Yue Hong House, Hong Tin Court in Lam Tin. He developed fever and myalgia on January 22, and presented with shortness of breath since January 30. He first attended United Christian Hospital (UCH) on January 30 and then sought medical treatment at Tseung Kwan O Hospital (TKOH) where he was admitted for treatment on the same day. Between onset and admission to TKOH, the patient had also consulted four different private practitioners. His respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus. He is now in a stable condition.

According to the patient's information, he had no travel history during the incubation period and mainly stayed home. His home contacts, namely his wife and daughter, are symptomatic and have been sent to UCH for further management.

The third case involves a 25-year-old man with good past health who lives at 183 Ma Tau Wai Road, To Kwa Wan. He developed fever on January 28. He presented with cough, runny nose and diarrhoea on January 29 and attended Hong Kong Baptist Hospital on the same day. He sought treatment at Hong Kong Baptist Hospital on February 3 and was referred to the Prince of Wales Hospital where he was admitted for treatment. His respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus. He is now in a stable condition.

According to the patient's information, he had no travel history during the incubation period. His wife is asymptomatic and will be sent to a quarantine centre for quarantine.

The taxi driver who drove the patient from Hong Kong Baptist Hospital to the Prince of Wales Hospital at around 2pm on February 3 is urged to call the CHP hotline.

The CHP will report the cases 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. 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 the cases and has extended the operation of the hotline until midnight starting yesterday. Members of the public can call the hotline from 8am to midnight daily for enquiries. As at midnight today (February 5), a total of 4 333 calls were received.

A dedicated webpage (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102465.html) 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 are uploaded onto the webpage to help the public grasp the latest updates. The CHP, together with departments including the Lands Department, Hospital Authority and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, has also launched the "Novel Coronavirus Infection Local Situation Interactive Map Dashboard" on the dedicated webpage. Relevant information is plotted on the map to help the public view information at a glance.

Meanwhile, the DH will implement further port health measures starting today (February 5). Travellers departing from Kai Tak Cruise Terminal and Ocean Terminal will be required to undergo temperature checks. The health declaration arrangements for inbound travellers will also be expanded to the above two terminals, the Hong Kong Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge as well as drivers of cross-boundary goods vehicles of Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok Control Points.

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.