

CHP investigates three additional confirmed case of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, May 15, the CHP was investigating three additional confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 822 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 821 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, two are imported cases and one is a local case with unknown source. A total of 44 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (May 1 to 14), including seven local cases of which one is from an unknown source.

Subsequent to the announcement by the CHP on the updated quarantine arrangements of local COVID-19 cases with the N501Y mutant strain, the CHP reminded that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases and had been released from the quarantine centres will be subject to compulsory testing on days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the DH. A Compulsory Testing Notice (CTN) was issued on May 7 (www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/202125124e/egn202125124278.pdf). They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day.

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the CTN tomorrow:

- Block N2, Kornhill, 16 Hong On Street, Quarry Bay; and
- Royalton, 118 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam.

Members of the public can check the deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises as stipulated in the aforementioned CTN on the Government's website (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf).

In view of the latest epidemic development in some areas in Anhui Province and Liaoning Province, the list of medium or high risk area in the Mainland has been updated accordingly. With effect from today, inbound travellers who have been to Anhui Province in the past 14 days do not fulfill the relevant specified conditions under the Return2hk Scheme and they are required to undergo 14 days compulsory quarantine upon arrival and the relevant compulsory testing arrangement. Shortening of compulsory quarantine period for fully vaccinated persons will also not be applicable. Meanwhile, the same arrangement will also be applicable to inbound travellers who have been to Liaoning Province in the past 14 days, which will become effective from tomorrow (May 16). For details of the Return2hk Scheme, members of the public can visit the Government's website (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/return2hk-scheme.html).

In view that the World Health Organization (WHO) has recently included

the variant B.1.617 as the fourth variant of concern (VOC), the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel has updated the Consensus Interim Recommendations on the Quarantine requirements for Vaccinated Close Contacts of Locally acquired cases of COVID-19, to replace "N501Y mutant strain" with "key mutation(s) indicating possible VOC defined by WHO" .

Details of the updated interim recommendation are available at the CHP website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24005.html).

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the CTNs. The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to CTNs published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop and undergo testing as soon as possible.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges 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 a 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). After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, 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 performing 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 doorknobs, 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 litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) 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.