

CHP investigates three additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, September 17, the CHP was investigating three additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 153 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 152 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases. Among them, case 12158 involves a 53-year-old male patient, who lives at Aigburth, Mid-levels. He travelled to India on August 31 by flight EK385 and tested negative in Hong Kong on August 30. He returned to Hong Kong on September 13 by flight EK384 and his specimen collected upon arrival in the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) on the same day tested negative. Subsequently, his sample collected on September 15 tested positive for COVID-19 and carries the L452R mutant strain but does not carry the N501Y or E484K mutant genes. The patient remains asymptomatic. The patient received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on April 8 and April 30 in Hong Kong. He works at Unit 1506A, International Commerce Centre, 1 Austin Road West, Tsim Sha Tsui, and last went to work on August 27. Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the case is continuing. As a prudent measure, the buildings where he resided and worked in Hong Kong during the incubation period will be included in a compulsory testing notice (CTN). Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before the specified date.

A total of 41 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (September 3 to 16) and all of them are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the CHP is investigating two overseas cases of COVID-19. The first case involves a 36-year-old male patient, who lives at 7 Lyttelton Road, Mid-levels. He travelled to the United States on August 19 by flight CX892 and tested negative in Hong Kong on the same day. The patient developed symptoms in the United States on August 29 and his specimen collected on the same day tested positive. He obtained negative result proof of a PCR-based nucleic acid test for COVID-19 on September 7 and returned to Hong Kong on September 11 by flight CX851. His specimen collected upon arrival in the TSCC at the HKIA on the same day tested negative for COVID-19. Subsequently, his sample collected on September 14 tested positive for COVID-19 and carries the L452R mutant strain but does not carry the N501Y or E484K mutant genes. The patient received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on March 23 and April 13 in Hong Kong. He works at 18/F, Kinwick Centre, 32 Hollywood Road, Central, and last went to work on August 19. The CHP has classified this case as a re-positive overseas case. Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the case is continuing. As a prudent measure, the buildings where he resided and worked in Hong Kong during the incubation period will be included in a CTN.

The second case involves a 16-year-old female patient, who lives at Block 9, Villa Esplanada, 8 Nga Ying Chau Street, Tsing Yi. She travelled to the United Kingdom (UK) on September 6 by flight CX251 and tested negative in Hong Kong on September 4. Her specimen collected in the UK on September 9 tested positive. The patient remains asymptomatic. She received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on July 19 and August 9 in Hong Kong. The CHP is following up on the case with the UK health authority. As a prudent measure, the building where she resided in Hong Kong has been included in a CTN.

In view of the fact that many recent imported cases have joined non-essential travel after vaccination, the spokesman for the CHP stressed, "The global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility, and there are also reports of breakthrough infections in some vaccinated individuals. The CHP strongly urged members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H)."

The spokesman reminded, "If travel is unavoidable, the CHP highly recommends the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure. They should avoid participating in non-essential mass gatherings or events held outside Hong Kong. They should continue to wear a surgical mask and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times. Parents are also urged to avoid taking unvaccinated children travelling."

Separately, according to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local COVID-19 cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day. Relevant deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises are listed on the Government's website

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are also reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the compulsory testing notice tomorrow (September 18):

- Tower 2, Phase 2A – Le Prestige, LOHAS Park, Tseung Kwan O
- Tung Shun Hing Building, 22 Chi Kiang Street, To Kwa Wan

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).

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). Generally speaking, COVID-19 vaccination can prevent COVID-19 infection, and if infected, reduce the risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19.

The CHP called on members of the public to pay attention to their health condition, seek medical advice early and undergo COVID-19 nucleic acid testing as soon as possible if respiratory symptoms develop. They should also maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times, to protect themselves against infection and prevent the spread of the disease in the community.

On a personal level, members of the public should put on a surgical mask when they need to go out. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask. Hand hygiene should be performed 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. 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 the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.

To ensure household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) by pouring about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap). They should also pay attention to hygiene when using the toilet by putting the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.