

CHP investigates two additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 12), the CHP is investigating two additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 132 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 131 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The first case involves a 37-year-old man (the 131st case) who is the husband of the 31-year-old female patient of the 130th case confirmed yesterday (March 11). The patient with good past health arrived in Hong Kong with his wife and son from England on February 29. He stayed at his parents-in-law's flat at iPlace on Castle Peak Road in Kwai Chung. He developed fever since March 3 and was admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) for treatment during contact tracing by CHP yesterday. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and he is now in stable condition. The patient's son has developed runny nose and was sent to PMH for treatment. His parents-in-law are asymptomatic and have been arranged for quarantine.

The second case involves a 31-year-old man (the 132nd case). The patient with underlying illness lives at Serene Court, Sai Ning Street, Kennedy Town. He developed fever, myalgia and diarrhea since March 8. He attended a clinic at an institution yesterday and then attended the Accident and Emergency Department at Queen Mary Hospital. His deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and has been arranged for management at Tuen Mun Hospital. He is now in stable condition. The patient had travel history during the incubation period. He had been to Boston in the United States of America between February 22 and March 1. He then travelled from Boston to Manila in the Philippines via Tokyo in Japan arriving Manila on March 2. He returned to Hong Kong from Manila by flight CX930 by Cathay Pacific on March 8. His wife who lives with him is asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

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 the annex.

Meanwhile, the CHP is following up on the contact tracing of a confirmed case outside Hong Kong. The case involves a 55-year-old female patient confirmed in Beijing who took the flight CX857 (economy class cabin) by Cathay Pacific from Seattle in the United States to Hong Kong arriving on March 9 and then took the flight KA900 (economy class cabin) by Cathay Dragon from Hong Kong to Beijing on the same day. People who travelled on the same cabin of the two above-mentioned flights are urged to call the CHP hotline.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP reminded members of the public

that as the transmission of the COVID-19 virus has been increasing around the world, they are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong."

"Meanwhile, according to our epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in the local community involving large meal gatherings and other gatherings. Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

The spokesman said, "The CHP 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); cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use; 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 and the Hospital Authority.

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 32 507 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on the COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand 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;

- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- 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.

Members of the public are advised to consider avoiding all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. The public should take heed of the health advice below if it is unavoidable to travel outside Hong Kong and put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province of the Mainland where there is widespread community transmission of the COVID-19 virus;
- Avoid unnecessary travel to Korea (especially Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do where the majority of cases were reported), Iran, Italy, Bourgogne-Franche-Comte and Grand Est regions in France, the North Rhine-Westphalia region in Germany, Hokkaido in Japan as well as the La Rioja, Madrid and Pais Vasco regions in Spain;
- When travelling to countries/areas with active community transmission of COVID-19 virus, the public should avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms. 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.