

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 (February 27), the CHP is investigating two additional cases of COVID-19, taking the number of confirmed cases to 93 in Hong Kong so far.

Both confirmed cases today are associated with the cluster related to a Buddhist temple named Fook Wai Ching She. The first case involves a 70-year-old woman (the 92nd case) with underlying illnesses who lives in Block 4, Bauhinia Garden, Tseung Kwan O. She developed cough with sputum since February 13 and consulted the same private doctor on the same day and February 23. She called the CHP hotline yesterday (February 26) and was arranged to be admitted to United Christian Hospital (UCH) for treatment. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus and is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period but she visited Fook Wai Ching She on January 24 and 25, as well as daily visits during February 1 and 8. Her son who lives with her and presented with symptoms was transferred to UCH for treatment while her daughter-in-law and grandson are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The second case was detected via the "Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme" which covers patients attending the General Out-patient Clinics as well as Accident and Emergency Departments. It involves an 89-year-old woman (the 93rd case) with underlying illness who lives alone in Hung Fuk Building, 40-78 Kam Ping Street, North Point. She developed occasional cough since February 25. She sought medical attention at Anne Black General Out-patient Clinic yesterday. Her deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and was arranged to be admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for treatment. She is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period but she visited Fook Wai Ching She on January 25 and several times between February 1 and 12.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations revealed that the 92nd and 93rd cases together with the patients of the 64th, 65th, 70th, 73rd, 74th, 76th, 77th, 83rd, 84th, 86th, 89th and 91st cases announced earlier (14 patients in total) had all visited Fook Wai Ching She in Maylun Apartments in January or February or had association with confirmed cases who had been to the temple. The CHP urged people who had visited the temple on January 25 onwards to call the CHP hotline and those who developed relevant symptoms will be arranged to hospitals for treatment. The CHP will issue a letter to private practitioners today to remind them on the latest situation.

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.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "According to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in 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 meals gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

The spokesman said, "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. 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."

"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 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 22 689 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice 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 of Mainland where there is widespread community transmission of COVID-19 virus;
- Avoid unnecessary travel to Korea (especially Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do where the majority of the cases were reported);
- 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.