

CHP provides latest information on cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 11) received notification from the National Health Commission (NHC) on the latest information of the cluster of pneumonia cases detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province. The public is again urged to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

After the preliminary determination that the pathogen of "viral pneumonia with unknown cause" is a novel coronavirus, the National and Provincial Expert Groups have immediately revised and improved the protocols on diagnosis, treatment and surveillance of viral pneumonia with unknown cause. The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission has arranged the samples of existing patients to be tested for nucleic acid of the pathogen, and the Expert Groups have made overall assessments on the patients hospitalised for observation and treatment, taking into considering of information on clinical picture, epidemiological information and laboratory testing results, etc. As at yesterday (January 10), 41 patients have been diagnosed to have infection of the novel coronavirus. Among them, two patients have been discharged, seven patients are in serious condition and one died, while the remaining patients are in stable condition. A total of 739 close contacts have been identified and 419 of them are healthcare workers. All have been put under medical surveillance, and no related cases have been detected so far. There have been no new cases since January 3. For the time being, the Mainland's investigation has neither identified any infection of healthcare workers nor definite evidence of human-to-human transmission.

According to information from the NHC, investigation, epidemiological investigations revealed that the patients are mainly business operators at a market called "Hua Nan Seafood Wholesale Market" in Wuhan, which has been closed since January 1.

The Port Health Division (PHD) under the CHP has strengthened port health measures and enhanced temperature screening of travellers with increased frequency of random checking at all boundary control points. Additional thermal imaging system has been put in place at the Hong Kong International Airport dedicated for temperature screening of travellers from flights arriving Hong Kong from Wuhan.

Moreover, additional manpower has been assigned to enhance temperature screening of inbound travelers when the daily two high speed trains with stop at Wuhan arrive at Hong Kong to ensure that body temperature of all passengers from these two trains are checked. Fever patients with acute respiratory symptoms who had visited Wuhan within 14 days prior to the onset of the illness will be immediately referred to public hospitals for isolation, treatment and follow-up.

The PHD has advised the MTR Corporation Limited, the Airport Authority Hong Kong, and relevant airlines to enhance cleaning and disinfection measures of the high speed trains and planes from Wuhan as well as the cleaning of West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and Airport Terminal Building. Moreover, dissemination of health messages through broadcast to travellers at e.g. flight cabin/West Kowloon Station, and distribution of leaflets, promulgating travel health news on website and posters display, has been enhanced. The PHD will continue to maintain close liaison with stakeholders of all boundary control points to timely update them about the latest situation and relevant measures.

A dedicated webpage (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102465.html) has been set up to provide relevant information and health advice. To address the public's concern, the CHP will announce the details of cases fulfilling the reporting criteria (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/enhanced_sur_pneumonia_wuhan_eng.pdf) on the above webpage daily to enhance transparency.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- 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 secretion 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 or hand dryer. 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:

- 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 having 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 having a fever or other symptoms, inform the doctor of recent travel history and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.