

CHP provides latest information on pneumonia cases of novel coronavirus infection in Mainland and Taiwan

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 21) provides the latest information on the pneumonia cases of novel coronavirus infection detected in the Mainland and Taiwan. The public is again urged to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

According to the notification from the National Health Commission (NHC), 72 additional pneumonia cases of the novel coronavirus infection were reported in Hubei Province yesterday (January 20), including 60 cases in Wuhan. The additional cases in Wuhan comprised 33 male patients and 27 female patients, aged 15 to 88, who developed symptoms before January 18 this year. Among the additional cases, 17 are in serious condition, and three are in critical condition. In addition, three additional deaths were reported, which comprised an 89-year-old male, a 66-year-old male and a 48-year-old female. Separately, the second pneumonia case of the novel coronavirus infection with history of travel to Wuhan was also reported in Shanghai.

As of yesterday, the total number of novel coronavirus infections in the Mainland was 291 cases, including 270 in Hubei Province, five in Beijing, 14 in Guangdong Province and two in Shanghai. A total of 1 739 close contacts have been identified. All have been put under medical surveillance, with 817 of them having completed the surveillance.

As of yesterday, the total number of novel coronavirus infections in Wuhan was 258 cases. Among them, 25 patients have been discharged, and six have died. Currently, 227 are still hospitalised. Among them, 51 patients are in serious condition and 12 are in critical condition. A total of 988 close contacts have been identified. All have been put under medical surveillance, with 739 of them having completed the surveillance.

Separately, the CHP has also been closely monitoring the first confirmed case of infection of the novel coronavirus in Taiwan as imported from Wuhan. According to information from the health authority of Taiwan, the case involved a 55-year-old woman coming from Wuhan, who arrived at Taoyuan International Airport in Taiwan on January 20 and had presented with fever, cough and shortness of breath. Quarantine personnel at the airport arranged medical attention for the patient. The X-ray showed that the patient had pneumonia who was later tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP will continue to maintain its liaison with the NHC, the World Health Organization and the relevant health authorities, and closely monitor the situation for risk assessment."

The spokesman reminded the public to avoid close contact with persons

with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible community transmission of novel coronavirus infection. 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.

A dedicated webpage (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102465.html) has been set up by the CHP to provide relevant information and health advice on Severe Respiratory Disease associated with a Novel Infectious Agent. Information on the affected countries/areas is available from the following webpage: www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection.pdf.

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 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;
- 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:

- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible transmission of the novel coronavirus infection. 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.