

CHP reports latest situation of imported malaria cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 12) reported the latest situation of imported malaria cases involving persons coming from Africa and said that follow-up investigation of the cases is continuing.

From July 1 to August 12 (as at 2pm), the CHP recorded a total of 97 imported malaria cases, with 84 of them arriving from Guinea and the remaining 13 from other places in Africa. Among these cases, 22 cases were recorded between August 6 (after 2pm) and August 12. As of noon on August 12, 27 patients infected with malaria were hospitalised in public hospitals. No new death or critical cases were recorded.

The CHP will continue to implement a series of measures to follow-up on the imported malaria cases. Together with medical staff of the Hospital Authority, the CHP conducted health screening at Hong Kong International Airport for persons arriving in Hong Kong who had visited Guinea recently. People suspected of being infected with malaria and with clinical needs were immediately sent to hospital for treatment. For the others, arrangement will be made for them to stay in quarantine facility, and those who develop symptoms will be sent to public hospital for treatment.

"The above measures can effectively prevent imported malaria cases from entering the community. The risk of local transmission of malaria is extremely low, yet members of the public should remain vigilant. There are effective drugs against malaria and Hong Kong has sufficient stock of the drugs but early diagnosis and prompt treatment are crucial for treating malaria. As such, strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures remain the most effective means against malaria both locally and during travel," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Common symptoms of malaria include fever, chills, headache, muscle pain and weakness, cough, vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain. Severe malaria is serious and potentially fatal without proper treatment.

Travellers are urged to be alert to the malaria risk of travel destinations before departing and to take heed of the preventive measures below:

- Wear loose, light-coloured, long-sleeved tops and trousers, and use DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed parts of the body and clothing;
- Avoid using fragrant cosmetics or skin-care products and re-apply insect repellent according to instructions during outdoor activities;
- Before the trip, arrange a travel health consultation at least six weeks in advance for any extra measures against mosquito bites;
- During the trip, carry a portable bed net and apply permethrin (an insecticide) on it in rural endemic areas. Permethrin should not be applied

to the skin; and

- After returning from malaria endemic areas, continue to apply insect repellent for 14 days.

The incubation period of malaria varies with different species of Plasmodium. This usually ranges from seven to 30 days but may be up to months or even longer after the bite of an infected Anopheline mosquito. Anyone feeling unwell after returning from a trip should seek medical advice as soon as possible and provide travel details to their doctor.

Members of the public should also prevent the accumulation of stagnant water and maintain good environmental hygiene:

- Change the water in vases once a week;
- Clear the water in saucers under potted plants every week;
- Cover water containers tightly;
- Ensure air-conditioner drip trays are free of stagnant water;
- Put all used cans and bottles into covered dustbins; and
- Store food and dispose of garbage properly.

Members of the public are reminded to make reports to government departments via the hotline 1823 if mosquito problems are detected, and may visit these pages for more information: the [malaria page of the CHP](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), the [CHP Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the FEHD's [Guidebook on Control and Prevention of Mosquito Breeding](#).