

Government completes health quarantine work on World Dream cruise

The Government today (February 9) announced that the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) had completed tests on the novel coronavirus for over 1 800 crew members on the World Dream cruise. All samples tested negative for the novel coronavirus.

The Port Health Division of the DH has completed health quarantine work on the World Dream cruise and all people on board can disembark. The Government will facilitate immigration procedures for passengers. The cruise company will arrange passengers to disembark in an orderly manner and will provide them with a shuttle bus service.

The Government expresses appreciation to passengers and crew members for their understanding and patience during the past few days, and to the cruise company for its cooperation with the Government in implementing preventive and control measures. The Government also expresses gratitude to colleagues for joining hands in safeguarding public health, including those who are responsible for health quarantine work in the frontline, those conducting tests in laboratories, and those providing logistics support.

A spokesperson for the Government reiterated that, "In view of the spread of the novel coronavirus infection in the community, public health is our utmost priority. As some travellers who took the World Dream cruise were earlier confirmed to have been infected with the novel coronavirus, some crew members might have had direct contact with them. Upon relevant experts' advice, the CHP decided to conduct tests on crew members with a view to protecting the health of passengers. The purpose of the tests is to exclude that they are infected and thus will not pose health threats to the passengers."

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public returning to Hong Kong 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 performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching one's mouth, nose or eyes; before eating; after using the toilet; 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 litre 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;
- 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; 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 the spread of the disease.