

Special meeting of Pest Control Steering Committee convened to enhance inter-departmental collaboration in preventing spread of local dengue fever cases (with photo)

In response to the two epidemiologically linked local cases of dengue fever (DF) recorded earlier at Tin Shui (1) Estate in Tin Shui Wai, the interdepartmental Pest Control Steering Committee (PCSC) convened a special meeting today (July 5) to discuss the implementation of further measures to prevent the spread of local DF cases. The departments also reported the anti-mosquito work in premises under their respective management.

The Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, attended the meeting. Mr Tse said, "Aedes albopictus is a kind of mosquito that can transmit DF. It is now a critical moment to control the local DF outbreak. All bureaux and departments must carry out prompt, continuous, intensive and effective anti-mosquito operations to stop the further spread of DF and prevent it from becoming an endemic disease.

"Apart from strengthening anti-mosquito work, it is also important to enhance public awareness of mosquito prevention and control. By closely liaising with the relevant government departments and local organisations, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will widely distribute anti-mosquito posters and pamphlets through their communication networks to urge members of the public to stay alert and support the anti-mosquito work."

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health explained to the attendees the details of the local DF cases and the CHP's risk assessment. According to the current epidemiological information, the outbreak of local DF is still at an early stage, which is a critical moment. Effective anti-mosquito operations must be carried out at this stage to prevent further spread of DF.

The FEHD reported to various departments the targeted mosquito control operations conducted over the past month in response to the two local DF cases that occurred in Tin Shui Wai. The FEHD and relevant departments have intensified mosquito control work in the residences, workplaces and locations visited by the patients during the incubation period and after illness onset. These efforts include:

- conducting fogging operations in the scrubby areas within a 250-metre radius of the related locations and placing mosquito trapping devices to eradicate adult mosquitoes;

- carrying out inspection, removing stagnant water, applying insecticide and disposing of abandoned water containers weekly to prevent mosquito breeding;
- trimming of grass to remove the potential habitat of mosquitoes and facilitate mosquito control work; and
- stepping up publicity and education work, including organising health talks, deploying the Mobile Education Centre and distributing leaflets.

At the meeting, the FEHD urged all departments to actively take anti-mosquito measures and carry out intensive mosquito control operations in areas under their purview with a view to reducing the risk of DF transmission. Each department has also outlined a target list, encompassing all potential mosquito breeding places that are close to densely populated areas within their jurisdiction, for regular fogging operations.

The meeting was chaired by the Under Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Miss Diane Wong. Government bureaux, departments and organisations attending the meeting were the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department; the Architectural Services Department; the Buildings Department; the Civil Engineering and Development Department; the Development Bureau; the Department of Health; the Drainage Services Department; the Education Bureau; the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department; the FEHD; the Government Property Agency; the Hospital Authority; the Home Affairs Department; the Housing Department (HD); the Highways Department; the Information Services Department; the Lands Department; the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD); the Marine Department; the Social Welfare Department; the Transport Department; and the Water Supplies Department.

The Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, the Permanent Secretary for Environment and Ecology (Food), Miss Vivian Lau, and the Acting Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene, Mr Arsene Yiu, visited Tin Shui Estate in Tin Shui Wai and the vicinity yesterday (July 4) to inspect the mosquito control work carried out by relevant government departments for prevention of DF.

In order to prevent any outbreak of local DF, the HD, the FEHD and the LCSD have immediately stepped up anti-mosquito work in the vicinity of Tin Shui (1) Estate in Tin Shui Wai and places visited by the patients. These efforts are now being expanded to other areas in Tin Shui Wai and will continue for a period of time. The CHP also held health talks jointly with the FEHD in the district.

Apart from maintaining strict environmental hygiene, the public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;

- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas;
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing and uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities; and
- Seek medical advice promptly if experiencing DF symptoms (including high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pain, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph nodes and rash).

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from affected areas should apply insect repellent for 14 days (DF) or at least 21 days (Zika Virus Infection) upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor. DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

*For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF pages of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), as well as the Guidebook on Control and Prevention of Mosquito Breeding of the FEHD.

