

CHP investigates two suspected food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 24) investigating two suspected food poisoning clusters affecting 27 persons, and appealed to members of the public to patronise reliable and hygienic restaurants or food suppliers, and maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The first cluster involved 19 students and four staff from a sheltered workshop in Chai Wan, including nine males and 14 females aged between 21 and 76. Three of the affected persons sought medical advice and none required hospitalisation.

The other cluster involved four students from a sheltered workshop in Sha Tin, including one male and three females aged between 37 and 66. One of the affected persons sought medical advice and none required hospitalisation.

All affected persons had lunch provided by a food supplier, Chez Lung Catering Co. Limited, on January 22. They developed diarrhoea and vomiting about seven to 28 hours after consuming the food. Initial investigations of the CHP revealed that the food poisoning might have been caused by infection of *Clostridium perfringens*. The CHP has arranged the collection of stool specimen of patients for testing in order to ascertain the source of infection. The CHP suspected that the food concerned was pork chop with onion sauce.

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has conducted inspections at the food supplier's premises yesterday (January 23) and today. Preliminary investigation by the CFS suspected that the incriminated food item was inadequately cooked, with prolonged storage under improper temperature. Investigation is ongoing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted site visits at two sheltered workshops and provided health advice to the staff of the workshops concerning proper disinfection, and personal and environmental hygiene. The workshops have been put under medical surveillance.

The CHP is aware that Chez Lung Catering Co. Limited also supplies food to other sheltered workshops and schools. The CHP has contacted the relevant institutions and no other individual has been found to be affected after investigation. Investigation of the CHP is ongoing.

The CHP said that food poisoning caused by *Clostridium perfringens* is usually associated with meat and meat products that are cross-contaminated, inadequately cooked or stored under sub-optimal temperature for prolonged period. The incubation period ranges from 6 to 24 hours (usually 10 to 12 hours). Severe abdominal pain and acute diarrhoea are common symptoms.

To prevent foodborne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Pre-cooked or leftover foods should be stored and reheated properly before consumption;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hotpot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked foods;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine or wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.

HKSAR Government welcomes announcement by People's Bank of China on measures deepening Mainland-Hong Kong financial co-operation

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government welcomes the announcement by the People's Bank of China (PBoC) today (January 24) on a series of measures which deepen the financial co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong and expresses gratitude for the Central People's Government's (CPG) continuous support towards consolidating and strengthening Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre.

The announcement covers six new measures, including (1) promoting use of Mainland bonds as eligible collaterals; (2) allowing foreign investors to participate in the Mainland bond repurchase business; (3) promulgating the implementation arrangements of the enhanced Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect Scheme; (4) introducing facilitative payment arrangements for Hong Kong and Macao residents purchasing properties in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA); (5) expanding the scope of Shenzhen-Hong Kong co-operation on cross-boundary credit referencing pilots; and (6) further expanding the cross-boundary e-CNY pilots in Hong Kong.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, said, "I express my deep gratitude for the CPG's staunch support towards the financial development of Hong Kong. Hong Kong is a world-leading international financial centre. The six new measures announced today deepen the mutual access between the financial markets of the Mainland and Hong Kong and better serve international investors' need for liquidity management of investments in the Mainland bond market, which are conducive to giving full play to Hong Kong's role as an international financial centre and actively contributing to building strength in finance and the high-quality development of finance of our country. The new measures also meet the demands for cross-boundary financial services of the residents and businesses of the Mainland and Hong Kong by providing innovative payment services for cross-boundary retail consumption by residents of the two places, facilitating Hong Kong residents purchasing properties in the Mainland cities of the GBA, and providing more convenient services to businesses of the two places seeking cross-boundary financing. The HKSAR Government will continue to actively consolidate and strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre, capitalising on our strengths in financial services."

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, said, "The 'three connection, three facilitation' new measures under this announcement enhance the existing Bond Connect and Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect mechanisms and enrich their content, increasing the attractiveness of these schemes for investors, deepening the mutual access between the financial markets of the Mainland and Hong Kong, further consolidating Hong Kong's role as an offshore Renminbi business hub, as well as providing more convenience to residents and businesses in various aspects. These measures can strengthen Hong Kong's unique role and function in connecting the Mainland with the international markets and support the orderly opening up of the financial market of our country."

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, said, "The new measures bring new opportunities for Hong Kong's financial sector. The HKSAR Government and financial regulators will continue to maintain close communication with the PBoC and relevant Mainland authorities to implement the various policy measures on enhancing financial co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong."

CHP investigates local measles infection case and reminds public that vaccination is the most effective

preventive measure

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (January 24) investigating a local case of measles infection and reminded the public that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

The case involves an 11-month-old boy with good past health. He had developed fever, cough, running nose, vomiting and diarrhea since January 13. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) on January 15 and 16. He developed rash on January 16 after admission to the paediatric ward of QEH on that day. He is in stable condition after treatment and was discharged on January 22.

His blood sample tested positive for immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibodies to measles virus upon laboratory testing. The patient has not received measles vaccinations and had no travel history during the incubation period. His three household contacts are currently asymptomatic.

"The global immunisation coverage rates have dropped since the COVID-19 pandemic. Many countries worldwide, including the United Kingdom and some European countries are facing a resurgence of measles outbreaks. In view of the continuous increase in measles cases in the European Region, the World Health Organization (WHO) has urged parents to bring their children to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent measles from spreading," a spokesman for the DH said.

The CHP reiterated that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. During the COVID-19 pandemic over the past three years, parents, schools and healthcare workers in Hong Kong continued to support childhood immunisations, striving to maintain the immunisation coverage rates at a high level. As revealed by the vaccination uptake of primary school students and the findings of the territory-wide immunisation surveys regularly conducted by the DH, the two-dose measles vaccination coverage has been consistently maintained at a high level, well above 95 per cent, and the local seroprevalence rates of measles virus antibodies reflect that most of the people in Hong Kong are immune to measles. On the whole, the information available indicates that the risk of large-scale outbreak is considered to be low in Hong Kong. However, it is possible for some not fully vaccinated people to get infected and transmit the measles virus to susceptible people (including children aged below one who are not due for the first dose of measles vaccine).

The spokesman reminded members of the public that delays in vaccination will weaken the protection for children against measles, and parents are reminded to maintain up-to-date vaccination for their children for comprehensive and timely protection.

Members of the public who are planning to travel to places with a high incidence or outbreaks of measles should review their vaccination history and

past medical history, especially people born outside Hong Kong who might not have received a measles vaccination during childhood. Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, with unknown vaccination history or unknown immunity against measles, are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccinations at least two weeks before departure.

Measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. A patient can pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of a skin rash.

The spokesman advised, "The incubation period (the period from infection to appearance of illness) of measles ranges from seven days to 21 days. Symptoms of measles include fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes. If symptoms arise, members of the public should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should also avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below one. Those suspected to have been infected are advised to seek medical attention as early as possible and reveal relevant contact history of measles to healthcare professionals."

Besides being vaccinated against measles, members of the public should take the following measures to prevent infection:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- Clean used toys and furniture properly; and
- Persons with measles should be kept out of school till four days from the appearance of a rash to prevent the spread of the infection to non-immune persons in school.

For more information on measles, the public may visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). Members of the public who are going to travel can visit the website of the DH's [Travel Health Service](#) for news of measles outbreaks outside Hong Kong.

[HKMA and PBoC announce measures to deepen financial co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the People's Bank of China (PBoC) announce today (January 24) six policy measures to deepen the financial co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland, including:

1. Expanding the list of eligible collateral for the HKMA's RMB Liquidity Facility to include RMB bonds issued onshore by the Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China and the policy banks of the People's Republic of China;
2. Further opening up the onshore repurchase agreement (repo) market to all foreign institutional investors (including Bond Connect investors) that already have access to the China Interbank Bond Market;
3. Releasing the amendments to the Implementation Arrangements for the Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect Pilot Scheme in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA);
4. Implementing facilitative measures on the remittances for property purchase by Hong Kong and Macao residents in the Mainland cities in the GBA;
5. Promoting the collaboration on cross-boundary credit referencing to facilitate corporates' cross-boundary financing activities;
6. Expanding the cross-boundary e-CNY pilots in Hong Kong

The Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Eddie Yue, said, "We are pleased to see the announcement of the six measures. They will promote further opening up of the Mainland's financial market, strengthen Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre and offshore RMB business hub, and foster closer connections within the GBA. The announcement is the result of the concerted effort of the HKMA, the PBoC and other relevant financial regulatory authorities in the Mainland and Hong Kong. We will continue to work closely with them and the industry to ensure timely and smooth implementation of these measures, and explore further enhancements."

[Fatal traffic accident in Tai Po](#)

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Tai Po today

(January 24) afternoon in which a 71-year-old man died.

At around 1.30pm, the 71-year-old man was riding a bicycle along a cycling track on Ting Kok Road towards Tai Mei Tuk. When approaching near Ting Kok Village, the cyclist reportedly collapsed.

Sustaining no superficial injury, the man was rushed to Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 2.37pm.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, New Territories North is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 3800.