

Update on dengue fever

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 31) reported the latest number of dengue fever (DF) cases, and urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From May 24 to yesterday (May 30), the CHP recorded three imported DF cases. The patients had been to the Maldives (one case) and Indonesia (two cases) respectively during the incubation period.

As of yesterday, 27 cases of DF, including 26 imported and one local cases, had been recorded in 2024. In 2023, 62 imported cases of DF were recorded.

According to the World Health Organization, the global incidence of DF has markedly increased over the past two decades, posing a substantial public health challenge. In 2023, ongoing transmission, combined with an unexpected spike in DF cases, had resulted in close to a historic high of over 5 million cases and more than 5 000 dengue-related deaths reported in over 80 countries/territories. The latest surveillance data shows that there is an increase in DF cases noted in some places in Asia (such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) compared to the same period last year. Since the beginning of 2024, the Americas, including Brazil, Argentina and Peru, have recorded over 8 million cases, a record number. Detailed information on the latest DF situation in Hong Kong, as well as neighbouring and overseas countries and areas, has been uploaded to the CHP website (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/df_imported_cases_and_overseas_figures_eng.pdf).

"Apart from general measures, travellers returning from areas affected by DF should apply insect repellent for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to a doctor," a spokesman for the CHP said.

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; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor

activities.

â€‹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
- Reapply 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.

â€‹The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF page 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](#).

[Response to media enquiries on value of total retail sales for April](#)

In response to media enquiries on the release of the value of total retail sales for April today (May 31), a Government spokesman gave the following response:

The year-on-year decline in the value of total retail sales in April this year was affected by various factors, including:

(1) The Easter holidays rendered the effects of the changing consumption pattern of residents more visible. During this year's Easter holiday period from the end of March to early April, there was a notable increase in the number of residents' departures compared to the Easter holidays in the preceding year. When residents made outbound trips, it not only affected their local consumption during their time away but also could have reduced consumption in the days before and after the trips.

(2) The base of comparison of the total retail sales value in the same period last year is relatively high. In April 2023, local consumption sentiment was rather buoyant, as Hong Kong just returned to normalcy after the pandemic and

with the Government's disbursement of consumption vouchers, etc. In addition, in the initial period of normal travel resumption, the length of stay of inbound visitors was longer and their per capita spending was also higher. As a result, excluding the months of Lunar New Year and Christmas, the value of total retail sales in April 2023 was the highest since June 2019.

Besides, the unstable weather conditions in April this year, with higher-than-usual rainfall, also had some impact. Looking ahead, the changing consumption patterns of visitors and residents would continue to present challenges to the retail sector. Nevertheless, the increase of visitor arrivals, rising employment earnings, and the recent stabilisation of asset markets, would provide support to the retail sector and the overall economy of Hong Kong. In addition, the Government's strenuous efforts to promote a mega event economy and boost market sentiment would also help.

The Government will continue to monitor the situation and introduce measures to boost Hong Kong's economy in a timely manner.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (May 31) released the latest grading of water quality for 39 gazetted beaches (see Note 1) and one non-gazetted beach (see Note 2).

Fifteen beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 18 as Fair (Grade 2) and seven as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Chung Hom Kok Beach	Repulse Bay Beach*
Deep Water Bay Beach*	Silver Mine Bay Beach*
Hap Mun Bay Beach*	South Bay Beach*
Hung Shing Yeh Beach*	St. Stephen's Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Tong Fuk Beach
Lo So Shing Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Lower Cheung Sha Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach
Middle Bay Beach	

Grade 2 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach*	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Butterfly Beach*	Kwun Yam Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Lido Beach*

Casam Beach*	Pui O Beach*
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach*	Shek O Beach*
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Silverstrand Beach*
Clear Water Bay Second Beach*	Stanley Main Beach*
Discovery Bay Tai Pak Beach	Tai Po Lung Mei Beach*
Golden Beach*	Trio Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach*	Kadoorie Beach*
Approach Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach*
Cafeteria Old Beach	Ting Kau Beach*
Castle Peak Beach	

Compared with the grading released last week, Golden Beach, Hoi Mei Wan Beach and Lido Beach have been upgraded from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Clear Water Bay Second Beach and Stanley Main Beach have been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a tropical cyclone or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666. Members of the public can also obtain the latest daily water quality forecast information for all beaches that are open for swimming through the Beach Water Quality Forecast mobile application (available for download from: www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQApp) or the dedicated beach water quality forecast page (www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQForecast) on the EPD's beach thematic website.

Note 1: Lifesaving services are provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department at 22 gazetted beaches, marked with an asterisk (*) above, from April 1. Due to the damage caused to the footpaths leading to Chung Hom Kok Beach by landslides, the beach is temporarily closed until further notice. For details, please refer to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department's Special Announcement (www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/beach/index.html).

Note 2: This refers to Discovery Bay Tai Pak Beach which is a non-gazetted beach that has no lifesaving service.

HAD's emergency hotline activated

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

Following the issuing of Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3, the Home Affairs Department has activated a round-the-clock hotline, 2572 8427, for public enquiries on the tropical cyclone situation.

Care centres remain open

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals:

"The Social Welfare Department announces that while Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 has been issued, all child care centres, centres providing after school care programmes, elderly services centres and day rehabilitation units including sheltered workshops, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres, integrated vocational training centres and day activity centres will remain open during their normal operating hours. If necessary, members of the public can contact the centres to make arrangements for the safe return home of their children and family members."