

Update on dengue fever and chikungunya fever

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 30) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF) and chikungunya fever (CF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

A. Dengue fever

From November 23 to 29, the CHP recorded three imported DF cases. The patients had been to the Philippines (two cases, including one case epidemiologically linked to a case from last week) and Cambodia (one case) during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (November 29), 156 cases had been confirmed this year, of which 29 were local cases and 127 were imported cases. The imported cases were mainly from Thailand (34), Mainland China (29) and the Philippines (21).

DF remains endemic in some areas in Asia and beyond. The latest figures for 2018 revealed that 76 936 cases had been recorded in Thailand, 2 742 in Singapore (since December 31, 2017) and 177 in Japan. In Taiwan, 182 local cases have been recorded in 2018.

"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 the doctor," a spokesman for the CHP said.

B. Chikungunya fever

From November 23 to 29, the CHP recorded one confirmed CF case. The patient had been to Thailand during the incubation period.

As of yesterday, two confirmed cases of CF had been recorded in 2018, both of which were imported cases (one was imported from the Philippines and the other from Thailand).

CF is a mosquito-borne disease caused by the chikungunya virus. It is clinically characterised by fever frequently accompanied by joint pain. Other common signs and symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash. Joint pain is often very debilitating, but usually lasts for a few days or may be prolonged for weeks. Most patients recover fully, but in some cases joint pain may persist for several months, or even years.

Chikungunya virus is transmitted to humans by mosquito bites. Although one vector, *Aedes aegypti*, is not found in Hong Kong, the other vector, *Aedes albopictus*, is widely distributed locally. These mosquitoes can be found

biting throughout daylight hours, though there may be peaks of activity in the early morning and late afternoon.

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.

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 page of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the [CF page](#) of the CHP, the latest [Travel Health News, tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).