

Update on measles cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (April 2) investigating three additional cases of measles infection involving workers at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA).

â€‹ The first case involves a 23-year-old man with good past health, who developed fever and cough on March 27 and rash on March 28. He sought medical attention at the Accident and Emergency Department at Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital on March 29 and 30, and was admitted for treatment on March 30. A laboratory test of his respiratory specimen was positive for the measles virus. He has been in a stable condition and had received two doses of measles vaccination. He had no travel history during the incubation period or the communicable period.

The second case involves a 29-year-old man with good past health, who developed cough, runny nose and headache on March 25 and rash on March 27. He consulted a general practitioner on March 29 and sought medical attention at the Accident and Emergency Department at Tin Shui Wai Hospital and was subsequently transferred to Tuen Mun Hospital for admission and treatment on the same day. A laboratory test of his respiratory specimen was positive for the measles virus. He has been in a stable condition. He reported to have measles vaccination and had no travel history during the incubation period or the communicable period.

The third case involves another 23-year-old man with good past health, who developed fever on March 29 and rash on March 30. He consulted a general practitioner on March 29 and another general practitioner on March 30. He then sought medical attention at the Accident and Emergency Department at Princess Margaret Hospital and was admitted for treatment on March 31. A laboratory test of his respiratory specimen was positive for the measles virus. He has been in a stable condition. He reported to have measles vaccination and had no travel history during the incubation period or the communicable period.

According to the patients, all of them did not have contact with measles patients during the incubation period. Their home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far and have been put under medical surveillance.

â€‹ Upon notification of the cases, the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. Initial investigations revealed that no contact has shown measles-related symptoms so far. The public places the patients visited during the communicable period are listed in the appendix.

"The incubation period (the period from infection to appearance of illness) of measles ranges from seven days to 21 days. Members of the general public who have visited the public places listed in the appendix during the period should observe if they develop relevant symptoms, such as fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes in seven to 21 days (the medical

surveillance period). If symptoms arise, they 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 1. 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," a spokesman for the DH said.

The DH anticipates that the measles outbreak at the airport will not be concluded in the near future, so the control measures at the airport including vaccination and blood testing services will continue for a period of time till further notice. Detailed arrangements will depend on the latest situations and will be announced in due course.

"In view of the tight supply of measles vaccines around the globe currently, the DH has to reserve vaccines for people who are most in need and arrange vaccination for those who do not have sufficient immunity against measles in a more effective and timely manner," the spokesman said.

From today to April 4, the vaccination quota for the measles vaccination stations at the airport is set at 500 doses daily. Eligible airport staff will be limited to the following target groups:

- (1) Born in or after 1967, and have not received two doses of measles vaccination, and have not been infected with measles before, and with evidence of living with infants under 1 year old or living with pregnant women; or
- (2) Have laboratory evidence of testing not positive against measles antibody (IgG).

Details of evidence are as follows:

- (a) Supporting documents for living with infants under 1 year old: for example birth certificate, discharge summary or vaccination card of the infant
- (b) Supporting documents for living with pregnant women: for example, positive pregnancy tests or antenatal follow-up cards of the pregnant women
- (c) Supporting documents for laboratory evidence: for example blood results from the DH's measles serology test or any laboratory within the past 12 months

The vaccination arrangements from April 2 to 4 at the airport vaccination stations are as follows:

Venue:	Port Health Office Health Post (South Arrival Apron Passenger Vehicle Lounge, Level 4, Terminal 1) Multi-function Room, HKIA Tower (Level 5, Terminal 2)
Hours:	10am to 1pm 2pm to 5pm 6pm to 9pm

A total of 124 persons received measles vaccination at the vaccination stations as at 5pm today, bringing the cumulative number of vaccinations given to 7,645. A hotline (2125 1122) has been set up for public enquiries and operates from 9am to 5.45pm daily. As of 5pm today, the hotline had received a total of 2,623 enquiries.

The spokesman reiterated that for airport staff who do not belong to the target groups, there is no pressing need for them to receive measles vaccination and resources should be reserved for those in most need.

In addition, the DH will continue with the provision of a measles serology test service for airport staff belonging to target group (1) to identify those who need measles vaccination. As announced earlier, from April 1 to 4 the DH will be able to provide blood test service to around 100 airport staff daily. Nine blood samples have been collected today.

The blood test station is located at the south side before the Immigration Hall at Level 3 of Terminal 2 (non-restricted area). The station will be open from 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm. The DH will notify the participants individually of the serology results by phone.