

Update on number of dengue fever cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 15) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From March 7 to 14, the CHP recorded two imported DF cases. The patients had been to Thailand during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (March 14), 31 cases had been confirmed this year, all of which were imported cases. The cases were mainly imported from Indonesia (seven), Malaysia (seven) and Thailand (six).

DF remains endemic in some areas of Asia and beyond. The latest figures for 2019 revealed that 9 914 cases had been recorded in Thailand, 36 664 in the Philippines, 26 545 in Malaysia (which is 157 per cent higher compared to the number of cases reported during the same period in 2018), 1 995 in Singapore (since December 30, 2018), 38 122 in Vietnam (which was 3.6 times the number of cases reported in the same period in 2018) and 49 in Japan. In the Americas, the latest figures indicated that 6 338 cases were filed in Mexico in 2019.

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 loose, light-coloured, long-sleeved tops and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or exposed parts of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from areas affected by DF and Zika virus infection should apply insect repellent for 14 days or at least 21 days respectively 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 may refer to the CHP's [tips for using insect repellents](#) for details.