

CHP investigates nine additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 0.00am, August 31, the CHP was investigating nine additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 4 811 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 4 810 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, two had a travel history during the incubation period.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

In view of the severe epidemic situation, the CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. As a number of recent cases involve elderly people, the CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public

understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

Regular voluntary COVID-19 testing arrangement for designated groups of front-line workers at Kwai Tsing Container Terminals

The Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) will provide regular COVID-19 tests for front-line workers at Kwai Tsing Container Terminals (KTCTs) starting tomorrow (September 1).

Further to the discussion between the THB and the respective port operators, regular tests will be arranged for four designated groups of workers who need to work onboard cargo vessels or may have contacts with sea crews on the vessels, including stevedores, operational/yard supervisors, ship planners and security and safety officers. Around 1 200 workers are involved in these work groups.

The testing is voluntary. Front-line workers who wish to participate in the tests are required to register their personal details (including names, contact numbers, etc) with their affiliated terminal operators and submit a consent form prior to taking the tests. Terminal staff registered can take the test at a specific time slot every week at the three designated testing points located at Terminals 2, 4 and 9 of KTCTs as arranged by the respective terminal operators. Duty officers of the testing institution will collect the specimens of nasopharyngeal swab tests from the participating employees and deliver them to laboratories for examination. The testing institution will not retain the personal data of the participants. In case of a positive test result, the Centre for Health Protection, the THB and the respective terminal operators will be notified for further follow-up.

In response to the recommendation of the health authorities, the terminal staff may take the tests every seven days during the initial period of the testing arrangement. The arrangement will be reviewed having regard to the epidemic situation and the views of the health authorities afterwards.

The THB appeals to the designated front-line workers to actively participate in the regular testing arrangement with a view to safeguarding public health and minimising the spreading of risk in the community.

Company fined \$92,000 for late payment of wages

Power Professional Production (HK) Limited was prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for failing to pay wages in accordance with the Employment Ordinance (E0). The company was fined a total of \$92,000 after pleading guilty at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (August 31).

The company failed to pay five employees' wages totaling about \$322,000 within seven days after the expiry of the wage periods as required by the E0.

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers, directors and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages to employees within the time limit stipulated in the E0," a spokesman for the LD said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in

enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

CHP investigates suspected case of food poisoning

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 31) investigating a suspected food poisoning case involving consumption of mushrooms.

The case involves a 54-year-old woman, who developed nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhoea around one hour after consuming cooked mushrooms at home yesterday (August 30). The mushrooms were bought from a hawker in the vicinity of Tai Po Hui Market. The patient sought medical attention at the Accident and Emergency Department of Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital on the same day and was admitted for further management. She is in stable condition.

The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

"Mushroom poisoning is generally acute. Common presentations include gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain appearing shortly after ingestion. Depending on the mushroom species, patients may also have other symptoms like profuse sweating, hallucination, coma or other neurological symptoms as well as liver failure. Death may result in severe cases," a CHP spokesman said.

"We advise the public to buy mushrooms from reputable and reliable suppliers and not to buy mushroom products which may be mixed with unknown species. Members of the public should not pick wild mushrooms for consumption as it is difficult to distinguish edible mushroom species from inedible ones. Mixing of edible species with inedible or poisonous species of mushroom will not dilute toxicity. Cooking in most cases does not destroy toxicity," the spokesman added.

"If mushroom poisoning is suspected, the patient should seek immediate medical attention and bring along any available remnant for identification," the spokesman said.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (August 31), 22 COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 4 342 patients with confirmed or probable infections have been discharged.

At present, there are 667 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 196 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 343 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 18 public hospitals and a community treatment facility, among which 26 patients are in critical condition, 29 are in serious condition and the remaining 288 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Details of the above-mentioned patients are as follows:

Patient condition	Case number
Discharged	3026, 4162, 4214, 4287, 4365, 4370, 4430, 4431, 4451, 4462, 4534, 4561, 4605, 4626, 4643, 4647, 4687, 4694, 4703, 4739, 4754, 4800
Critical	1401, 1470, 1650, 1835, 1989, 2007, 2792, 2912, 2968, 2989, 3308, 3635, 3744, 3764, 3904, 3949, 4101, 4187, 4213, 4429, 4530, 4641, 4706, 4729, 4774, 4788
Serious	1779, 1956, 1968, 2079, 2282, 2334, 2404, 2576, 3274, 3366, 3377, 3496, 3497, 3617, 3621, 3968, 4148, 4272, 4336, 4395, 4599, 4602, 4613, 4635, 4642, 4648, 4667, 4702, 4732