

Updates on four staff members confirmed with COVID-19 in Princess Margaret Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson of Princess Margaret Hospital made the following updates today (July 30) regarding four staff members confirmed with COVID-19:

Three Patient Care Assistants working in the Medicine and Geriatrics ward at Lai King Building and one Patient Care Assistant working at an out-patient clinic of the Oncology Department will receive treatment in isolation and are in stable condition.

Contact tracing has been continually conducted by the Infection Control Team, and a total of 21 staff members have been identified as close contacts that will be required to be quarantined. Twenty staff members from related departments have been tested for the virus by the hospital, with negative results. No patient at the working places of the four staff members concerned has been identified as a close contact. However, as a precautionary measure, the hospital has offered the testing service to patients in the wards concerned with all the results being negative. The hospital has reported the above results to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP).

Admissions and discharges at the relevant wards in Lai King Building will continue to be suspended, while thorough cleaning and disinfection have been carried out at relevant wards and the out-patient clinic of the Oncology Department. The staff quarters concerned have been thoroughly disinfected and will be suspended from service for now.

The hospital will continue to provide assistance to staff members of the departments concerned and will closely monitor health condition of staff members and patients concerned while maintaining close liaison with the CHP.

Government allows catering businesses to resume daytime dine-in services from tomorrow

A Government spokesman today (July 30) said that, after reviewing the implementation of cessation of dine-in services for the entire day

for catering businesses yesterday (July 29), the Government has decided to allow the resumption of daytime dine-in services from 5am to 5.59pm with effect from tomorrow (July 31), having noted the inconvenience and difficulties previously brought about for the public not working from home.

In view of the severe epidemic situation and the higher infection risks involved in eating without wearing a mask, it is necessary to impose more stringent epidemic prevention measures for the dine-in arrangement in catering business premises as below:

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(1) The number of customers at any catering premises at any one time must not exceed 50% of the normal seating capacity of the premises. No more than two persons may be seated together at one table within any catering premises;

(2) Tables available for use or being used by customers within any catering premises must be arranged in a way to ensure there is a distance of at least 1.5 metres or a partition which could serve as an effective buffer between one table and another table at the premises;

(3) Any premises (commonly known as a bar or a pub) that is exclusively or mainly used for the sale or supply of intoxicating liquor as defined in section 53(1) of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (Cap. 109) for consumption in that premises must be closed. Any part of a catering premises that is exclusively or mainly used for the sale or supply of such intoxicating liquor for consumption in that part must be closed; and

(4) Live performance and dancing must not be allowed in any catering premises. All karaoke and mahjong-tin kau activity carried on at any catering premises must be suspended. Other requirements and restrictions in relation to catering business premises would remain in effect, including wearing a mask at all times within any catering premises except when the person is consuming food or drink; conducting body temperature screening for all persons entering the premises; and providing hand sanitisers.

For the daily period from 6pm to 4.59am the next day, except for specific premises, a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises of the business, and close any premises, or part of the premises, on which food or drink is sold or supplied by the business for consumption on the premises. The premises concerned may still sell or supply food and/or drink for takeaway services and delivery during this period.

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The Government calls on the persons responsible for carrying on catering business to strictly abide by the above measures and to take further measures, such as arranging single-sided seats as far as practicable to avoid face-to-face contact and not to make table-sharing arrangements to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus.

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The Secretary for Food and Health will publish in the Gazette later

today the latest directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) regarding the above arrangements for the directions to take effect from tomorrow to August 4.

The spokesman reiterated that implementation of the temporary cessation of dine-in services was intended to curb the continued spread of the disease in the community by further minimising eating in groups and social contact in view of the severe epidemic situation.

The Government again strongly urges all employers to allow their employees to work from home as far as possible, thereby reducing the chance of infection when large groups of employees eat out during breakfast and lunch. Where possible, employers may implement flexible lunch hours or other measures to reduce the chances of employees going out and increasing contact among them.

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The spokesman also appealed to the public to continue to maintain social distance with other people and to avoid unnecessary gatherings in order to limit or cut the virus transmission chain in the community. This is to protect public health in Hong Kong on the whole and that of individuals, thereby easing the enormous pressure currently put on the public healthcare system.

EDB's latest public service arrangements

In view of the extension of special work arrangements for government employees until August 9, a spokesman for the Education Bureau (EDB) announced today (July 30) that all Regional Education Offices and the Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres will continue to provide emergency services and essential public services during this period.

The spokesman reminded that members of the public who need these services should contact the service units concerned by phone in advance.

As for the appointments already made for the audiological services at the Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, officers of the EDB will contact the parents concerned for appropriate arrangements.

The School Places Allocation Section will continue to provide limited hotline services to handle enquiries.

When circumstances permit, the Teacher Registration Team will invite applicants to proceed with the necessary procedure in due course. New

teachers taking up teaching posts in the new school year would not be affected in principle.

Regarding the following public facilities/units of the EDB, they will remain closed to the public temporarily until further notice:

1. Hong Kong Teachers' Centre, Special Education Resource Centre, Central Resources Centre and Young Achievers' Gallery located at Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre;
 2. Arts and Technology Education Centre (including STEM Education Centre);
 3. School Places Allocation Section;
 4. Qualifications Framework Secretariat; and
 5. Teacher Registration Team.
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Latest arrangements of Marine Department services

In light of the announcement by the Government today (July 30) that the special work arrangement for government employees will be extended for one week until August 9, a spokesman for the Marine Department (MD) announced that the licensing and port formalities services at the Yau Ma Tei Marine Office, Tuen Mun Marine Office, Sai Kung Marine Office, Tai Po Marine Office, Aberdeen Marine Office, Cheung Chau Marine Office and Shau Kei Wan Marine Office; the seafarers' examination and certification services; mercantile marine services; local vessel surveying services as well as its enquiry services will continue to be suspended until August 9. Those who have made an appointment for services or examinations will be separately informed of alternative arrangements.

Services at the Central Marine Office and other services provided by the MD will remain unaffected.

CHP investigates case of Shiga toxin-producing E. coli infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (July 30) investigating a case of Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC) infection, and hence reminded the public to maintain good personal, food and environmental hygiene against intestinal infections.

The case involves a 27-year-old male with good past health, who has presented with diarrhoea and abdominal pain since July 18. He was admitted to Tseung Kwan O Hospital on July 21 and was discharged on July 24. The patient has been in a stable condition all along.

His stool specimen grew STEC upon laboratory testing.

Initial enquiries of the CHP revealed that the patient had no travel history during the incubation period. Investigations are ongoing.

"Escherichia coli (E. coli) is a bacterium that is commonly found in the gut of humans and warm-blooded animals. Most strains of E. coli are harmless. Some strains, however, such as STEC, can produce powerful toxins and cause severe food-borne disease. The most recognised serogroup of STEC is E. coli O157:H7," a spokesman for the CHP explained.

Preventive measures for STEC infection are similar to those recommended for other food-borne diseases. The public are advised to observe good personal and food hygiene:

- Adopt the Five Keys to Food Safety in handling food, i.e. Choose (choose safe raw materials), Clean (keep hands and utensils clean), Separate (separate raw and cooked food), Cook (cook thoroughly) and Safe Temperature (keep food at a safe temperature) to prevent food-borne diseases;
- Wash hands properly with liquid soap and water before handling food, after handling raw meat or poultry and before eating, and after going to the toilet or changing diapers;
- Cook food and boil water thoroughly before consumption. When cooking or reheating, the core temperature of the food should reach at least 75 degrees Celsius;
- Avoid consumption of unpasteurised milk or undercooked food; and
- Consult your doctor immediately if you have symptoms of STEC infection, particularly bloody diarrhoea.

The public may visit the CHP's [STEC page](#) for more information.