

CHP announces one new melioidosis case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (February 21) said that one new melioidosis case had been recorded in the past week (February 14 to 20).

The case involved a 91-year-old male with underlying illnesses. During the incubation period, he first lived in Tung Chung and then moved to North District. He developed a fever and attended North District Hospital on February 11, and was admitted for treatment on the same day. His clinical sample was confirmed to be positive for *Burkholderia pseudomallei* upon testing.

The CHP is investigating the infection source of the case. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing.

So far, three melioidosis cases have been recorded in Hong Kong this year. In 2024, 23 melioidosis cases were recorded.

Person-to-person transmission and animal-to-human transmission are rare, but the bacteria causing melioidosis can survive in the local environment. Melioidosis is an endemic disease in Hong Kong and melioidosis cases have been recorded in Hong Kong each year.

According to literature, melioidosis cases are more common after typhoons or rainstorms. The bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei* in soil and muddy water may become exposed to the ground after typhoons or rainstorms, and the bacteria could spread more easily with strong winds or rainstorms. As such, the number of melioidosis cases may increase.

With this in mind, where practicable, members of the public should stay indoors during typhoons and rainstorms, avoid travelling to areas with potential flooding, and do not wade in or have contact with muddy water and soil. In addition, high-risk individuals should avoid paths near stormwater drains where aerosols may be generated from contaminated water.

Members of the public should also take the following preventive measures against infection:

- Avoid contact with contaminated soil;
- Wear appropriate protective clothing or footwear when participating in activities with possible contact with soil or water, e.g. using gloves and wearing boots. High-risk individuals may also consider wearing a surgical mask;
- Wash or shower after exposure to contaminated water or soil;
- Always clean any wounds as soon as possible and cover them with waterproof dressings;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water after handling soil or gardening;
- Observe food hygiene and avoid drinking raw water; and

- Travellers can contract the disease through outdoor water sports. Risk of infection can be minimised by avoiding exposure to water sources (such as rivers, ponds or lakes) that might be contaminated.

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â€‹The CHP appealed to members of the public to seek medical advice if they develop symptoms, in particular people with diabetes or other immunocompromising conditions, in order to receive an appropriate medical diagnosis and treatment. For more information on melioidosis, please visit the website of the CHP

at www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/24/101110.html.