

CHP announces two new melioidosis cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 30) announced that two new melioidosis cases were recorded in the past week (May 23 to 29).

The first case involves an 88-year-old male with underlying illnesses who lives in Eastern District. He developed a cough in early April. On May 18, he attended Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital due to his health condition and was admitted for treatment on the same day. He subsequently developed a fever after admission.

The second case involves a 58-year-old male with good past health who lives in Kwun Tong. He developed an on and off fever, a cough with sputum and shortness of breath on May 8. He attended two hospitals on the Mainland and was admitted for treatment from May 10 to May 21. He returned to Hong Kong and attended Kwong Wah Hospital on May 21 and was admitted for treatment on the same day.

The clinical samples were of the two cases confirmed to be positive for *Burkholderia pseudomallei* upon testing.

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

So far, seven 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.