

CHP investigates 12 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, April 19, the CHP was investigating 12 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 696 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 695 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, 11 are imported cases and one is epidemiologically linked with a local case.

The CHP said that one confirmed case announced today who was epidemiologically linked with a local case (case number: 11696) resided on 8th Floor in Block 2, Oi Fai House, Yau Oi Estate in Tuen Mun. This additional case resided in an adjacent unit to a previously confirmed case (case number: 11645) on the same floor. The CHP is proactively following up to investigate whether the infections of the cases are related, so as to stop the potential risk of further spread of the virus.

Given environmental contamination on the same floor of the building cannot be excluded, the CHP decided to carry out a prudent measures on infection control. The DH will issue quarantine orders to all remaining asymptomatic residents on 8th Floor of Block 2, Oi Fai House in Yau Oi Estate and transfer them to quarantine centres while symptomatic residents will be sent to the hospital for treatment.

Separately, the CHP is continuing its investigation on a confirmed case who was epidemiologically linked with a local case announced yesterday (April 18). The 31-year-old woman was a clinic staff member working at a clinic located at The Centrium, 60 Wyndham Street, Central. The CHP has arranged the close contacts of the case, including clinic staff members and patients, to undergo quarantine at quarantine centre(s). The building has been included in the compulsory testing notice by the Government yesterday. Any person who had been present at The Centrium at any time during the period from March 29 to April 18, has to undergo testing by April 20, 2021. The CHP specifically appealed to anyone who had been present at the clinic to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to compulsory testing notices published in the Gazette.

Meanwhile, regarding a preliminary positive case involving a kindergarten teacher announced by the CHP on April 17, her sample was tested by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the DH and the result was indeterminate. She has undergone further tests after admitted to a hospital and the result was negative. She was also tested negative for COVID-19 antibody. As such, the case will not be classified as a confirmed case at the moment.

A total of 175 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (April 5 to 18), including 37 local cases of which 12 are from unknown sources.

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).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice. The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to compulsory testing notices published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop and undergo testing as soon as possible.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).

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. 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.

The spokesman 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 and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps). 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;
- 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.