

CHP investigates five additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (July 3), the CHP was investigating five additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 248 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 247 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve one male and four females aged between 3 and 49. They had 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.

As the number of inbound travellers at Hong Kong International Airport has substantially increased recently, the DH considered that it is necessary to adjust the test result waiting arrangements according to the daily number of inbound travellers after reviewing the maximum capacity of the result waiting area at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at AsiaWorld-Expo and the Holding Centre for Test Result (HCTR) at the Regal Oriental Hotel.

If the day's number of inbound travellers is expected to exceed the capacity of the TSCC and the HCTR, the DH will adopt a triage measure based on risk assessment. Passengers arriving from areas with lower risk will proceed to the designated place for the 14-day compulsory quarantine after collecting their deep throat saliva samples at the TSCC. If their test result is positive, the DH will arrange to send them to a hospital for treatment as soon as possible and arrange to send their close contacts to a quarantine centre.

As for the arrangement to stay at the HCTR, the DH will make flexible arrangements according to its capacity and the daily number of passengers arriving on afternoon flights. If necessary, inbound travellers arriving in the afternoon could also be arranged to wait for test results at the TSCC. The DH urged inbound travellers to follow instructions from staff and allow flexibility for arrangements upon their arrival.

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

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 infection, 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.