

CHP investigates highly suspected imported case of novel coronavirus infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (January 22) investigating a highly suspected imported case of novel coronavirus infection. The public is again urged to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

The case involved a 39-year-old male who lives in Wuhan with good past health. He developed fever and blocked nose since yesterday (January 21). He travelled from Wuhan to Shenzhenbei (G1015 carriage No. 3, seat No. 10D) and then from Shenzhenbei to Hong Kong (G5607 carriage No. 2, seat No. 2D) by High-Speed Rail yesterday. Upon arrival at the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the patient was detected to have fever by staff of DH's Port Health Division and was immediately taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for isolation and treatment. He was transferred to the Princess Margaret Hospital for further management today. The patient is now in stable condition.

The patient's respiratory samples were preliminarily tested positive for novel coronavirus.

The CHP has immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. According to the patient, he neither visited any health care facilities, wet market or seafood market during the incubation period, nor had any exposure to wild animals or poultry or contact with patients with symptoms of pneumonia or upper respiratory tract infection.

Preliminary investigations revealed that he travelled with his wife, two sons and mother-in-law, who have remained asymptomatic so far and had already departed Hong Kong for the Philippines today.

Contact tracing by the CHP is ongoing. Passengers sitting on the same row or within two rows in front of or behind the patient will be regarded as close contacts while other passengers in the same carriage will be regarded as other contacts. Quarantine will be arranged for close contacts while medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts.

The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) for the case. Persons who took the high-speed train from Wuhan to Shenzhenbei (G1015, carriage no. 3) and from Shenzhenbei to Hong Kong West Kowloon Station (G5607, carriage no. 2) on January 21 should call the hotline. The hotline operates from 8pm to midnight tonight and from 8am to 5.45pm from tomorrow (January 23) onwards to answer public enquiries.

The CHP has reported the case to the World Health Organization (WHO), National Health Commission (NHC), Health Commission of Guangdong Province and the health authority of the Philippines.

Meanwhile, the CHP also provides the latest information on the pneumonia cases of novel coronavirus infection detected in the Mainland, Macao and the United States.

According to the notification from the NHC today, 149 additional pneumonia cases of novel coronavirus infection were reported in various places across the Mainland as of midnight on January 21. The distribution is as follows:

Areas	Case(s)
Hubei Province	105
Hunan Province	1
Henan Province	1
Jiangxi Province	2
Shandong Province	1
Sichuan Province	2
Zhejiang Province	5
Chongqing	5
Tianjin	2
Yunnan Province	1
Guangdong Province	12
Beijing	5
Shanghai	7

In the same period, three additional deaths were reported (all were from Hubei Province). As of yesterday, the total number of novel coronavirus infections reported to the NHC was 440 cases. Among them, 102 patients are in serious condition and nine died (all were from Hubei Province).

Separately, the CHP has also been closely monitoring the first confirmed case of infection of novel coronavirus in Macao as imported from Wuhan. According to information from the Health Bureau of Macao, the case involved a 52-year-old woman from Wuhan, who was tested positive for novel coronavirus upon laboratory testing. In addition, the United States also recorded the first confirmed case of infection of novel coronavirus as imported from Wuhan. According to information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the patient resides in Washington, who sought medical care at a medical facility in the State of Washington after returning from Wuhan on January 15. The patient was later tested positive for novel coronavirus.

To further enhance the efficiency in releasing details on infection cases, the latest information received from notifications will be updated to

the CHP website daily at 9am and 6pm, in addition to issuing press release daily.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP will continue to maintain its liaison with the NHC, the WHO and the relevant health authorities, and closely monitor the situation for risk assessment."

The spokesman advised the public to avoid unnecessary travel to Wuhan of Hubei Province. If it is unavoidable to travel to Wuhan, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong.

A dedicated webpage (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102465.html) has been set up by the CHP to provide relevant information and health advice on Severe Respiratory Disease associated with a Novel Infectious Agent. Information on the affected countries/areas is available from the following webpage: www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection.pdf.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; 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 liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- 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.

The public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- Avoid unnecessary travel to Wuhan of Hubei Province. If it is unavoidable to travel to Wuhan, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible community transmission of novel coronavirus infection. If it is unavoidable to come into contact with them, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;

- Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene;
- Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry/birds or their droppings;
- Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- Do not consume game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served;
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
- If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if experiencing a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and
- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.