

CHP investigates two cases of measles infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (March 23) investigating two cases of measles infection and hence reminded the public again that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

The first case involves a 41-year-old man with good past health, who developed fever and rash on March 12. He sought medical advice at North Lantau Hospital on March 21 and was transferred and admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital for further management on the same day. His throat swab specimen tested positive for measles virus upon laboratory testing. He is in a stable condition.

The patient reported to have received measles vaccination and have no contact with measles patients during the incubation period. He worked in the same airline as an earlier measles case announced on March 15 but did not report direct contact with that case. He travelled to a number of countries including Japan, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines during the incubation and communicable periods. His home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far and have been put under medical surveillance. According to the patient, he had no significant exposure to public places locally during the communicable period.

Initial epidemiological investigations revealed that the incubation period and communicable period of this case overlapped with that of the outbreak of measles infection announced yesterday (March 22) which involved three patients working at the Hong Kong International Airport. Relevant contact tracing, including the patient's close work contacts on the concerned flights, are being conducted. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

The second case involves an 11-month-old baby girl with good past health, who developed fever on March 16 and rash on March 19. She attended private clinics on March 17 and 19. She was brought to Tuen Mun Hospital for medical attention on March 20 and was admitted for treatment. Her nasopharyngeal aspirate tested positive for measles virus upon laboratory testing. She is in a stable condition.

The patient is not yet suitable for measles vaccination. Investigations revealed that she had no contact with measles patients during the incubation period. She had no travel history during the communicable period but had travelled to Taiwan during the incubation period. Her home contacts developed sore throat recently but have all recovered. They have been put under medical surveillance.

Relevant contact tracing has been conducted. The public places the baby girl visited during the communicable period are listed below:

Date	Time	Place	End of medical surveillance for contacts
March 17	09:00-11:00	Clinic of Dr Sham Fung-ting, Connie (Room D, G/F, Yat Sun Building, Fau Tsoi Street, Yuen Long, New Territories)	April 7
March 19	10:30-12:00	Human Health Medical Centre (Shop No.20-21, MTR Yuen Long Station, Yuen Long, New Territories)	April 9

"Our epidemiological investigations of the outbreak announced last night are continuing. To prevent possible spread of infection at the airport, a vaccination station will be set up at the airport starting today to provide measles vaccination to non-immune people working there if necessary. A hotline (2125 1122) is setup for public enquiries and will operate from 9am to 5.45pm daily," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The spokesman explained that measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets spread or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. A patient can pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of skin rash.

The spokesman reminded, "The incubation period of measles ranges from seven days to up to 21 days. Contacts who are not immune to measles may develop relevant symptoms, such as fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes, in the incubation period. They should observe if they develop such symptoms in the period. If symptoms arise, they should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below 1. They should also report their symptoms and prior travel history to the healthcare workers so that appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at the healthcare facilities to prevent any potential spread."

In Hong Kong, children are given the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine at 1 year old, followed by a second dose at Primary One under the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme. The coverage of MMR vaccination in Hong Kong is over 95 per cent at Primary One.

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. Members of the public who are planning to travel to places with high incidence or outbreaks of measles should review their vaccination history and past medical history,

especially people born outside Hong Kong who might not have received measles vaccination during childhood. The history of measles vaccination in Hong Kong is available in the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, with unknown vaccination history or with unknown immunity against measles are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccination at least two weeks before departure," the spokesman said.

Besides being vaccinated against measles, members of the public should take the following measures to prevent infection:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- Clean used toys and furniture properly; and
- Persons with measles should be kept out of school till four days from the appearance of rash to prevent spread of the infection to non-immune persons in school.

For more information on measles, please visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). For outbreak news of measles outside Hong Kong or the latest travel health advice, please visit the website of DH's [Travel Health Service](#).