

FHB convenes inter-departmental meeting on dengue fever (with photo)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, today (August 15) convened an inter-departmental meeting to listen to the latest reports and risk assessment by the Department of Health (DH), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Hospital Authority (HA) in the light of the four local dengue fever cases.

At the meeting, the DH and the HA reported that they had formulated related contingency measures and guidelines in response to the local situation to tackle the risk of dengue fever. The DH issued letters to doctors and hospitals today to appeal to them to stay alert to suspected cases. In collaboration with public and private hospitals as well as private doctors, the DH will enhance surveillance, early referral and prompt control to prevent further spread of the disease. The DH also issued letters to all schools, kindergartens and institutions to urge them to take heed of environmental hygiene and prevent mosquito infestation.

According to HA's risk assessment of the current situation, public hospitals have to maintain high vigilance and get prepared for the contingency response for Dengue Fever. These include the activation of the "e-Dengue" enhanced surveillance system tomorrow to promptly identify patient cases and report for early diagnosis and treatment. Furthermore, mosquito control measures have also been stepped up in public hospitals and clinics as well as their construction sites to eliminate mosquito breeding site.

"The Government is very concerned about the four local dengue fever cases confirmed yesterday. To tackle the potential risk of dengue fever outbreak in Hong Kong, we will not take the risk lightly and take every measure to enhance the mosquito control work," Professor Chan said.

"Mosquito prevention work requires the concerted efforts of all sectors of the community. Sustained efforts of the public to keep the environment clean are crucial for effective mosquito control work. Members of the public should remain vigilant against mosquito-borne diseases so as to prevent the spread of dengue fever in Hong Kong. I appeal to all sectors in the community to work together with the Government to keep up effective measures against mosquito breeding."

In view of the ongoing investigation of the four local cases of dengue fever announced by the DH yesterday, the FEHD immediately stepped up targeted mosquito prevention and control work at the relevant districts in accordance with the established mechanism. Today, the FEHD deployed staff to carry out inspections as well as prevention and control work including conducting fogging operations to reduce the number of adult mosquitos, applying larvicides, clearing stagnant water and disused articles and conducting grass cutting to eliminate potential mosquito breeding grounds in areas within a 500-metre radius of the residences of the patients and the places visited by

them during the incubation period (including Highland Park and Kwai Shing West Estate in Kwai Tsing District, Sai Tso Wan Recreation Ground in Lam Tin, Tsui Chuk Garden and Lion Rock Park in Wong Tai Sin and the vicinity of Hillside Road in Cheung Chau). The FEHD also collected samples of *Aedes albopictus* for virus testing with a view to identifying the infection source of the dengue fever cases.

Moreover, the relevant government departments will also strengthen mosquito prevention and control work and take effective anti-mosquito measures in construction sites, schools and private housing estates under their management.

The FEHD and the DH's Centre for Health Protection (CHP) have conducted health talks for local residents. The FEHD and the relevant government departments will continue to enhance public education and publicity to remind the public to stay vigilant against the potential risk of mosquito-borne diseases including dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis and Zika Virus Infection as well as continue to adopt mosquito prevention and control work at home to thoroughly eliminate potential mosquito breeding grounds.

The Food and Health Bureau also informed the relevant bureaux and departments of the four local cases of dengue fever through the government's inter-departmental Pest Control Steering Committee so that various departments could strengthen mosquito control work and take corresponding measures immediately.

As *Aedes albopictus* breeds in small water bodies, the Government reminded members of the public to strengthen mosquito prevention and control measures at home by inspecting their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, scrubbing vases and pot plant saucers at least once a week, properly disposing of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes, and drilling large holes in unused tyres. The public are also advised to keep drains free of blockage and fill up all depressions to prevent puddles from forming. They should also scrub all drains and surface sewers with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any mosquito eggs.

Members of the public should call 1823 in cases of mosquito problems and may visit the dengue fever pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the FEHD's [Guidebook on Control and Prevention of Mosquito Breeding](#) for more information.

