

CHP investigates two additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 12), the CHP is investigating two additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 132 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 131 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The first case involves a 37-year-old man (the 131st case) who is the husband of the 31-year-old female patient of the 130th case confirmed yesterday (March 11). The patient with good past health arrived in Hong Kong with his wife and son from England on February 29. He stayed at his parents-in-law's flat at iPlace on Castle Peak Road in Kwai Chung. He developed fever since March 3 and was admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) for treatment during contact tracing by CHP yesterday. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and he is now in stable condition. The patient's son has developed runny nose and was sent to PMH for treatment. His parents-in-law are asymptomatic and have been arranged for quarantine.

The second case involves a 31-year-old man (the 132nd case). The patient with underlying illness lives at Serene Court, Sai Ning Street, Kennedy Town. He developed fever, myalgia and diarrhea since March 8. He attended a clinic at an institution yesterday and then attended the Accident and Emergency Department at Queen Mary Hospital. His deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and has been arranged for management at Tuen Mun Hospital. He is now in stable condition. The patient had travel history during the incubation period. He had been to Boston in the United States of America between February 22 and March 1. He then travelled from Boston to Manila in the Philippines via Tokyo in Japan arriving Manila on March 2. He returned to Hong Kong from Manila by flight CX930 by Cathay Pacific on March 8. His wife who lives with him is asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. Quarantine will be arranged for close contacts while medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts. For the progress on the contact tracing of the cases, please see the annex.

Meanwhile, the CHP is following up on the contact tracing of a confirmed case outside Hong Kong. The case involves a 55-year-old female patient confirmed in Beijing who took the flight CX857 (economy class cabin) by Cathay Pacific from Seattle in the United States to Hong Kong arriving on March 9 and then took the flight KA900 (economy class cabin) by Cathay Dragon from Hong Kong to Beijing on the same day. People who travelled on the same cabin of the two above-mentioned flights are urged to call the CHP hotline.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP reminded members of the public

that as the transmission of the COVID-19 virus has been increasing around the world, they are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong."

"Meanwhile, according to our epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in the local community involving large meal gatherings and other gatherings. Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

The spokesman said, "The CHP 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); 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."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) for public enquiries. The hotline operates from 8am to midnight daily. As at 4pm today, a total of 32 507 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on the COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

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 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 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;

- 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.

Members of the public are advised to consider avoiding all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. The public should take heed of the health advice below if it is unavoidable to travel outside Hong Kong and put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province of the Mainland where there is widespread community transmission of the COVID-19 virus;
- Avoid unnecessary travel to Korea (especially Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do where the majority of cases were reported), Iran, Italy, Bourgogne-Franche-Comte and Grand Est regions in France, the North Rhine-Westphalia region in Germany, Hokkaido in Japan as well as the La Rioja, Madrid and Pais Vasco regions in Spain;
- When travelling to countries/areas with active community transmission of COVID-19 virus, the public should avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms. 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.
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Public reminded of health quarantine arrangements on inbound travellers from overseas and urged to pay attention to overseas situation of COVID-19 outbreak

The Department of Health (DH) today (March 12) reminded the public that in response to the latest situations of COVID-19, starting from 0.00am on March 14, the DH's Port Health Division officers will issue quarantine orders under the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) to people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to Italy, France (Bourgogne-Franche-Comte and Grand Est), Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia), Japan (Hokkaido) and Spain (La Rioja, Madrid and Pais Vasco) in the past 14 days, regardless of whether they are Hong Kong residents. They will have to stay in a quarantine centre for quarantine.

Meanwhile, the measures for those who have been to Korea and Iran in the past 14 days to undergo quarantine at quarantine centre remain unchanged.

As the World Health Organization declared on March 11 that the global COVID-19 outbreak can be described as a pandemic, it is expected that the number of cases, deaths and countries affected will continue to surge.

The Centre for the Health Protection under the DH has been closely monitoring the global situation, particularly Europe where the outbreak has been rapidly evolving, including Italy (12462 cases), France (2281 cases), Spain (2140 cases) and Germany (1567 cases) (as at 6pm Hong Kong time today). For the situation of other countries/areas, please refer to the [information](#) uploaded onto the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

Members of the public should also pay special attention to a number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 related to group tours to India or Egypt that were recently recorded in Hong Kong, indicating the possibility of community transmission there.

A spokesman for the CHP said that in view of proliferation of the

disease around the world, members of the public are advised to consider avoiding all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. If it is unavoidable to travel to countries/areas outside Hong Kong, they should put on a surgical mask and continue to do so for 14 days upon their return to Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "The Government will consider the health risk level of countries/areas and timely formulate and update corresponding port health and quarantine measures. Before travelling outside Hong Kong, members of the public should be aware of the potential health risk and applicable quarantine arrangements upon returning to Hong Kong."

The Government has been conducting detailed assessments for formulating port health measures in response to the occurrence of outbreaks in countries or areas outside Hong Kong. The assessment will take into account factors such as the number, distribution and rate of increase of infected persons, measures put in place for surveillance and control of the outbreak, and the frequency of visits by Hong Kong residents. The Government will review and adjust the measures in view of the developments.

The spokesman urged members of the public who are currently outside Hong Kong, in particular those studying abroad in Europe or America who might now be on term break, to come back to Hong Kong as soon as possible if they have plans to return. They should also pay attention to the latest situation of COVID-19 outbreak in the country where they are in as well as that in neighbouring areas, and consider avoiding non-essential travel.

If it is unavoidable to travel outside Hong Kong, the public should wear a surgical mask and avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms. Furthermore, they should observe personal and environmental hygiene and take preventive measures, in particular, avoid touching animals (including game) poultry/birds or their droppings; avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms; and do not consume game meat or patronise food premises where game meat is served.

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs today (March 12) seized about 4 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$4.2 million at Hong Kong International Airport.

A male passengers arrived in Hong Kong from Dubai, the United of Arab Emirates today. During customs clearance, the batch of suspected cocaine was found concealed inside the false compartment of his hand-carried suitcases and briefcase. He was then arrested.

The arrested man, aged 70, has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. The case will be brought up at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (March 13).

Customs will continue to apply a risk assessment strategy to select inbound, outbound and transit passengers for clearance to intercept different kinds of drug trafficking activities.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Government clarifies functions of LOCPG in Hong Kong

On some District Councillors' suggestion today (March 12) that representatives of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (LOCPG) should not be invited to attend local community activities to avoid speculation of LOCPG's meddling with Hong Kong's affairs, a government spokesman said in response to media enquiries that:

"LOCPG is an office set up by the Central People's Government (CPG) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). One of its main functions is to liaise with various sectors of the Hong Kong community to enhance exchanges between the Mainland and Hong Kong. Hence, it is normal for LOCPG, on invitation, to attend activities and ceremonies in Hong Kong as this is one of its functions in the HKSAR."

"As stated in LOCPG's official website, the main functions of LOCPG include liaising with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR and the Hong Kong Garrison of the Chinese People's Liberation Army; promoting economic, educational, scientific and technological, cultural and athletic exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland; liaising with various sectors of the community of Hong Kong to enhance exchanges between the Mainland and Hong Kong; and reflecting the views of Hong Kong residents on the Mainland, etc."

"Since the establishment of the HKSAR, the HKSAR Government and the offices set up by the CPG in the HKSAR have been acting in strict accordance with the basic policies of "one country, two systems", "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy, as well as complying with the provisions of the Basic Law in performing their respective duties."

Blood test result of pet dog with low-level infection of COVID-19 released

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said today (March 12) that the blood test result of a pet dog which had repeatedly tested weak positive for COVID-19 virus is negative.

The AFCD collected samples from the dog five times for tests since late February and detected low levels of the COVID-19 virus from its nasal and oral cavity samples. A blood sample was also taken from the dog on March 3 for serological testing and the result is negative. The negative result indicates that there is not a strong immune response and that there are not measurable amounts of antibodies in the blood at this stage.

The negative serological test result does not suggest that the dog has not been infected with the virus. It is known in some asymptomatic or mild cases of human infections with other types of coronavirus that antibodies may not always develop. It is also not uncommon in the earlier stages of infections to have a negative result as it often takes 14 days or more for measurable levels of antibodies to be detected. Another blood sample will be taken later for further testing.

On the other hand, the Department, together with the School of Public Health of the University of Hong Kong, has conducted gene sequencing of the COVID-19 virus found from the dog and its close contact persons who were confirmed infected. The viral sequences are very similar. The sequence results indicate that the virus likely spread from the infected persons and subsequently infected the dog.

The dog has not shown any signs of the disease related to COVID-19. It is currently under quarantine at the animal keeping facility at the Hong Kong Port of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. The Department will continue to closely monitor the dog which tested weak positive for the COVID-19 virus and repeat the test later. It will only be returned to its owner when the test result is negative. The Department has stepped up cleansing and disinfection of the facility.

COVID-19 is a newly emerged disease and the situation is still evolving. The AFCD will continue to work together with the Department of Health in handling relevant cases.

The spokesman reminded pet owners to adopt good hygiene practices (including hand washing before and after being around or handling animals, their food, or supplies, as well as avoiding kissing them) and to maintain a clean and hygienic household environment. People who are sick should avoid contacting animals. If there are any changes in the health condition of the pets, advice from a veterinarian should be sought as soon as possible.

The spokesman emphasised that there is currently no evidence that pet animals can be a source of infection of COVID-19 or that they can become sick. Apart from maintaining good hygiene practices, pet owners need not be overly concerned and under no circumstances should they abandon their pets.