

CHP investigates cluster of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 10) investigating a cluster of Legionnaires' disease (LD) cases, involving nine patients, and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

Further to the CHP's announcements of a cluster of LD cases respectively on February 1, 3, 6 and 7 involving six male patients and two female patients aged from 66 to 84, one additional LD case has been recorded.

The male patient, aged 65 with underlying illness, lives in Mun Ching House, Kai Ching Estate, Kowloon City. The patient's sample tested positive for *Legionella pneumophila*.

"Epidemiological investigations revealed that the patient had no travel history in the incubation period. Investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank,

wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2 μm filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
 2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

[Airmail services from Japan subject to](#)

delay

Hongkong Post announced today (February 10) that, as advised by the postal administration of Japan, airmail services to Hong Kong will be subject to delay. Owing to a significant increase in airmail being sent to Hong Kong, the administration indicated that there have been considerable delays of more than one week in handing posted items to airlines. In addition, airline companies may take a longer time to carry items due to the reduction of flight frequencies.

Government updates on situation of Hong Kong people in Wuhan

In response to media enquiries regarding the situation of Hong Kong people in Hubei Province, a spokesman for the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau said that as of this morning (February 10), the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government received more than 1,000 requests for assistance from Hong Kong people in Hubei Province, involving 2,000 people scattered over 30 cities in the province.

The HKSAR Government, through the Wuhan Economic and Trade Office (Wuhan ETO) has all along maintained close communication with the Hong Kong people in Hubei Province to understand their needs, and liaised with relevant government departments there to provide assistance wherever practicable.

"We understand that some Hong Kong people may have needs for medicaments and medical treatment. The Wuhan ETO has liaised with the Department of Health (DH) and contacted the Hong Kong people in need to gather information about their medical history with a view to obtaining medicaments they need from the Hospital Authority or from private medical practitioners via their relatives in Hong Kong, and passing the medicaments to Wuhan for further distribution to these people. The first batch of medicaments arrived at the Wuhan ETO yesterday and were successfully delivered to the people in need. Arrangements will be made to send the rest of the medicaments to Wuhan in batches as soon as possible," the spokesman said.

"Additionally, a health hotline was set up by the DH to provide medical advice to the Hong Kong people in need. The Wuhan ETO has also provided them with contacts of local medical organisations which offer online medical consultation services. Those in need may seek medical advice through this online service."

In considering whether to arrange the return of Hong Kong people in

Hubei, the spokesman pointed out that the Government would, in a prudent and thorough manner, evaluate the public health risks involved and the practicability, particularly in terms of ways to ensure that cross-infection would not occur during their return journey. Also to be considered are quarantine arrangements upon their arrival in Hong Kong including the availability of suitable quarantine venues with adequate capacity. The Government will act in a judicious manner, while continuing to maintain communication with the Hong Kong people there and making its utmost effort to provide them with suitable assistance.

Fatal traffic accident in Tseung Kwan O

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Tseung Kwan O this morning (February 10) in which a 39-year-old man died.

At about 7am, a motorcycle driven by the 39-year-old man was travelling along Po Lam Road towards Sau Mau Ping. When approaching Ma Yau Tong Village, the motorcycle reportedly rammed into the rear part of a medium goods vehicle which had stopped on the first left lane.

Sustaining multiple injuries, the motorcyclist was rushed to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 1.20pm.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, Kowloon East is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 2305 7500 or 2305 7570

Public hospital daily update on Wuhan-related cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (February 10), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 42 patients (13 male and 29 female, aged 21 to 92) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of severe

respiratory disease associated with a novel infectious agent. Specimens of the patients concerned have been sent for testing. There are still 95 patients under isolation.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.