

Transcript of remarks by STH

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session after the Hong Kong Housing Authority's regular open meeting today (July 12):

Reporter: "Lennon Walls" had been set up across districts in the past few days. Do you think such walls are a disturbance to the residents nearby? Or what should the Housing Authority do at some "Lennon Walls" that are set inside the public estates area? And also, how can we avoid clashes between people with polarised views?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: Hong Kong is an open and inclusive society. I would very much hope, no matter what we are going to put up, and however we are going to put up, we need to respect each other and allow each other to voice out their views in a peaceful and rational manner.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

DH to launch one-off mop-up programme for measles vaccination

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 12) announced that as a public health strategy to prevent and control measles, a one-off mop-up programme will be launched to provide free measles vaccination to specific target groups with the aim of boosting the community's herd immunity against measles.

"The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) under the CHP has earlier formulated the guiding principles for measles vaccination of non-immune adults. The mop-up exercise is launched making reference to the guiding principles by the SCVPD," a spokesman for the DH said.

"Under the Measles Vaccination Mop-up Programme 2019, measles vaccination will be provided free of charge to three target groups, namely healthcare workers, airport staff and foreign domestic helpers working in Hong Kong."

Taking into account the experience of the measles outbreak at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) between March and May this year as well as the global situation regarding measles outbreak, the DH has procured additional measles vaccines to enhance the community's immunity against measles and

ensure a steady supply of measles vaccines for the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme. Taking reference from the SCVPD's latest guiding principles and previous vaccination recommendation for healthcare workers, the DH expects that the one-off measles vaccination mop-up exercise will further boost Hong Kong's herd immunity after achieving measles elimination as verified by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Specifically, for healthcare workers and airport staff, the DH will continue to work closely with the Hospital Authority (HA) and Airport Authority in accordance with the mechanism established during the earlier measles outbreak at HKIA, and provide measles vaccination to the healthcare workers (including those working in the DH, other government departments and the HA) and airport staff who are non-immune to measles. The mop-up programme also covers healthcare workers at private hospitals. As for the provision of measles vaccination to foreign domestic helpers working in Hong Kong, the DH has been liaising with relevant consulate offices and organisations on the arrangements.

The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccines to be used in the mop-up programme were additionally procured by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government this April from one of the suppliers of registered MMR vaccines in Hong Kong, Merck Sharp & Dohme (Asia) Ltd (MSD). These vaccines were allocated to the Hong Kong market from other markets amid tight supply for MMR vaccines around the world. Although they were manufactured by the same manufacturer with the same master formula and finished product specifications as the MMR vaccine registered by MSD in Hong Kong, the packing of these vaccines is labelled in Spanish.

The SCVPD in an earlier meeting formulated the following three guiding principles after reviewing the latest global and local situation of measles, population immunity profile, the WHO's recommendations and overseas practices:

- i. All adults (especially non-local born) who are non-immune to measles are advised to receive MMR vaccination for personal protection and maintenance of high herd immunity in the community;
- ii. Special attention should be paid to international travellers and foreign domestic helpers (especially Filipino domestic helpers working in Hong Kong). They are considered to have a relatively higher risk of acquiring measles based on the local epidemiology of measles in the past few years; and
- iii. Foreign-born adults newly arrived in Hong Kong for residence, work or study should review their immune status and receive measles vaccination if they are non-immune, preferably before arrival in Hong Kong.

As measles was endemic in Hong Kong and most parts of the world before 1967, people born before 1967 are considered to have acquired immunity to measles through natural infection. For persons born in 1967 or after, they can be considered to be non-immune to measles and hence are advised to receive MMR vaccination if they fulfil all the following three criteria:

- i. did not have laboratory evidence of immunity (i.e. no laboratory test ever done or tested negative/indeterminate for measles immunoglobulin G);
- ii. did not have laboratory confirmed measles infection in the past; and
- iii. have never been vaccinated with two doses of measles-containing vaccine or have unknown vaccination status.

Regarding the schedule, non-immune adults who had no history of receiving any measles-containing vaccine or with unknown vaccination history are advised to receive two doses at least four weeks apart. Only one dose is required for those who had already received one dose of measles vaccination in the past.

A consensus summary of the SCVPD's guiding principles has been uploaded to the webpage of the SCVPD (www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html).

Update on dengue fever and chikungunya fever

â€‹ The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 12) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF) and chikungunya fever (CF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

A. Dengue fever

From July 5 to 11, the CHP recorded four imported DF cases. The patients had been to Bangladesh (one case), Malaysia (one case), the Philippines (one case) and Singapore (one case) during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (July 11), 77 cases had been recorded this year, all of which were imported. The cases were mainly imported from Malaysia (15), Thailand (15) and Indonesia (12).

The CHP has been closely monitoring the latest DF situation in neighbouring and overseas areas. DF is endemic in many tropical and subtropical areas of the world. In Guangdong, there were 394 cases (including 26 local cases) in the first six months of this year. In Taiwan, 251 cases (including 46 local cases) have been recorded in 2019 (as of July 11).

Detailed information on the latest DF situation in Hong Kong as well as neighbouring and overseas countries and areas this year has been uploaded to the CHP's website

(www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/df_imported_cases_and_overseas_figures_eng.pdf).

â€œApart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from areas affected by DF should apply insect repellent for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor," a spokesman for the CHP said.

B. Chikungunya fever

â€œFrom July 5 to 11, the CHP recorded a cluster of three confirmed CF cases. All the three patients travelled to Thailand together during the incubation period. No other CF cases were detected in Hong Kong in 2019.

CF is a mosquito-borne disease caused by the chikungunya virus. It is clinically characterised by fever frequently accompanied by joint pain. Other common signs and symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash. Joint pain is often very debilitating, but usually lasts for a few days or may be prolonged for weeks. Most patients recover fully, but in some cases joint pain may persist for several months, or even years.

Chikungunya virus is transmitted to humans by mosquito bites. Although one vector, *Aedes aegypti*, is not found in Hong Kong, the other vector, *Aedes albopictus*, is widely distributed locally. These mosquitoes can be found biting throughout daylight hours, though there may be peaks of activity in the early morning and late afternoon.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent

for children*;

- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF page of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the [CF page](#) of the CHP, the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).

Update on Candida auris cases in Kowloon West Cluster

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on Candida auris carrier cases in Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH), the spokesperson for Kowloon West Cluster (KWC) gave the following update today (July 12):

According to the contact tracing result, four more male patients (aged 36 to 64) who have stayed in the Medical and Geriatric Ward of PMH are confirmed as carriers of Candida auris while not having signs of infection. One of the patients was transferred to the Extended Care Ward of North Lantau Hospital and has been discharged, while the other three patients are being treated in PMH under isolation with stable condition. In accordance with prevailing guidelines, the following enhanced infection control measures have already been adopted in both hospitals:

1. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the wards concerned;
2. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures; and
3. Application of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff and patients.

KWC will continue to closely monitor the situation of the patients. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Lifesaving services at Clear Water Bay First Beach resume

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department has announced that the lifesaving services at Clear Water Bay First Beach in Sai Kung District resumed today (July 12). The lifesaving services at the beach were suspended earlier due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty.