

**Two more persons who joined package tours to Qingyuan and Foshan last month contracted Legionnaires' disease**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 7) announced that two cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD) are epidemiologically linked to a cluster of four cases announced on Wednesday (March 5). All six persons participated in package tours organised by the Sino Step Travel Services to Qingyuan and Foshan last month, and were classified as imported cases. The CHP urged those who participated in the package tours organised by the aforesaid travel agency to Qingyuan and Foshan between February 20 and 28 to contact the CHP as soon as possible for a health assessment and medical surveillance.

The CHP has been actively investigating and following up on the cases since receiving notification of the first case a few days ago. The CHP has proactively contacted the participants of the same tour group that included the first infected person – and two other groups with the same itinerary and hotel accommodation – to provide assessments and medical surveillance, and has discovered the two new cases.

The two most recent cases involve a 71-year-old male and a 69-year-old female who travelled on the package tours from February 20 to 22 and February 21 to 23 respectively.

Investigations revealed that the six cases had no common local exposure history. Five of them participated in the package tour to Qingyuan and Foshan that departed on February 20, and one participated in the same tour that departed on February 21. Similar to the five imported cases recorded in November last year involving two package tours to Foshan, they stayed at the Mehood Hotel in Foshan during the trip (address: 16 Hongling 1 Road, Shishan Town, Nanhai, Foshan). The CHP has notified the health authorities of Guangdong about the above cases for environmental investigations. The CHP's epidemiological investigations are still in progress.

The CHP has also notified the Travel Industry Authority to alert the travel industry about the situation. The CHP once again urges those who joined the following three package tours to call the hotline (Tel: 2125 2670) as soon as possible:

The hotline, which was launched yesterday (March 6), will be in operation until March 14 from 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 1pm on Saturday and Sunday. People who have joined the aforesaid package tours should seek medical advice immediately if they have a fever or feel unwell.

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 that 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.

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; 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. As infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of water pipes may harbour Legionellae bacteria, members of the public should drain or purge the pipes for at least one minute before use.

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.