

Update on dengue fever

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 15) reported the latest number of dengue fever (DF) cases, and strongly urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From November 8 to 14, the CHP recorded five imported DF cases. The patients had respectively been to Guangdong in Mainland China (two cases), Malaysia (two cases) and French Polynesia (one case) during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (November 14), 186 cases had been recorded this year (including 185 imported cases and one local case), as compared with 145 cases recorded in the same period last year. The imported cases were mainly from Thailand (32), Malaysia (27) and the Philippines (24).

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. According to the World Health Organization, some Asian countries are experiencing unusually high numbers of DF cases this year. The numbers of cases in several countries including Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam were much higher than the numbers for the same period in 2018.

According to the French Polynesia health authority, a DF outbreak in the French Polynesian islands has been ongoing since April 2019. As of November 3, more than 2 000 cases had been recorded this year, with most of them reported from Tahiti.

Separately, according to the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, as of October 31, 5 315 cases had been recorded in Guangdong this year, which was significantly higher than that in the same period last year (2 752 cases). The numbers of cases recorded in August, September and October were 1 209, 1 430 and 1 880 respectively. In Taiwan, as of yesterday, 577 cases (including 100 local cases) had been recorded in 2019.

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). Members of the public should stay vigilant and carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures.

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.

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 latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).