

Update on measles cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (March 25) reported the latest developments in its investigations into measles cases and reminded the public again that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP has continued to closely follow up on the outbreak of measles infection concerning people working at the Hong Kong International Airport announced last week. At a meeting with the Airport Authority (AA) and airline sector this morning, CHP representatives briefed them on the latest situation of the measles cases and the CHP's control and prevention measures at the airport, and provided them with relevant health advice and information on disease prevention."

As a key measure of outbreak control, the CHP has started providing vaccination to people working at the airport who are non-immune to measles since last Friday. The vaccination exercise aims to protect those non-immune to measles. The target group refers to people working at the airport who are:

1. Born in 1967 to 1984;
2. Have not received two doses of measles vaccination; and
3. Have not been infected with measles before.

"For those who were born before 1967 in Hong Kong, it is expected that the majority of them have contracted measles in the past, and thus have antibodies against measles. Those who have received two doses of measles-containing vaccine, including the majority of people born in 1985 or after, will also have sufficient protection against measles in general," the spokesman explained.

The CHP has set up two vaccination stations at the airport to facilitate those in need and will continue to closely liaise with the AA to explore ways to further enhance the vaccination arrangements. From today till Friday (March 25-29), those non-immune to measles working at the airport may receive measles vaccination at Port Health Office Health Post (South Arrival Apron Passenger Vehicle Lounge, Level 4, Terminal 1) and Multi-function Room, HKIA Tower, Level 5, Terminal 2 from 10am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm. The CHP will closely monitor and review the vaccination progress for people working at the airport. Arrangement after March 29 will be announced in due course.

From last Friday to yesterday (March 24), around 400 persons received measles vaccination at the vaccination station and 484 persons received the vaccination today. A hotline (2125 1122) is set up for public enquiries and operates from 9am to 5.45pm daily. As of 5pm today, the hotline received 550 enquiries.

On the supply of measles vaccines in Hong Kong, the DH maintains close liaison with the vaccine suppliers and learnt that the vaccine supply is currently stable. The DH has requested the suppliers to import extra quantities of measles vaccines to meet the local demand.

The spokesman said, "The CHP has issued letters to doctors and private hospitals today to provide them with the latest information on measles cases in Hong Kong. They are urged to implement appropriate infection control measures and reminded to notify the CHP of any suspected or confirmed cases. The CHP also provided contact information of measles vaccine suppliers to the private doctors."

The CHP's epidemiological investigations into the measles cases announced previously are ongoing. On the measles case announced yesterday involving a 27-year-old man, the public places he visited during the communicable period are listed below:

Date	Time	Place	End of medical surveillance for contacts
March 20	8.30am – 8.45am	Clinic of Dr Chan Lai-man (Room 3135, Lok Fu Shopping Centre, 3/F, Lok Fu, Kowloon)	April 10
March 21	8.40am – 9.05am	Clinic of Dr Chan Lai-man (Room 3135, Lok Fu Shopping Centre, 3/F, Lok Fu, Kowloon)	April 11
	3pm – 3.45pm	Town Health Integrated Medical Centre (Wong Tai Sin) (Shop 1, G/F, Kai Tak Garden Phase II, 121 Choi Hung Road, Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon)	

The spokesman explained that measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets spread or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. A patient can pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of skin rash.

The spokesman reminded, "The incubation period of measles ranges from seven days to up to 21 days. Contacts who are not immune to measles may develop relevant symptoms, such as fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes, in the incubation period. They should observe if they develop such symptoms in the period. If symptoms arise, they should wear surgical masks,

stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below one. They should also report their symptoms and prior travel history to the healthcare workers so that appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at the healthcare facilities to prevent any potential spread."

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. Members of the public who are planning to travel to places with high incidence or outbreaks of measles should review their vaccination history and past medical history, especially people born outside Hong Kong who might not have received measles vaccination during childhood. The history of measles vaccination in Hong Kong is available in the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, with unknown vaccination history or with unknown immunity against measles are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccination at least two weeks before departure," the spokesman said.

Besides being vaccinated against measles, members of the public should take the following measures to prevent infection:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- Clean used toys and furniture properly; and
- Persons with measles should be kept out of school till four days from the appearance of rash to prevent spread of the infection to non-immune persons in school.

For more information on measles, please visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). For outbreak news of measles outside Hong Kong or the latest travel health advice, please visit the website of DH's [Travel Health Service](#).