

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (83) in DH CDB/9/12/6 Pt.2

January 25, 2020

Dear Manager / Person-in-charge,

“Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance” Raised to Emergency Response Level

The Centre of Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health writes to inform you that the Government has decided to raise the response level of the “Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance” to the Emergency Level, based on the assessment that the risk of health impact caused by the novel coronavirus (nCoV) on the local population is high and imminent.

In Hong Kong, the CHP has enhanced surveillance since 31 December 2019. As of 25 January 6pm, five cases of nCoV infection were confirmed. Information on the number of cases reported in countries/areas is available on the designated webpage: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection_en.pdf.

In view of the latest situation, institutions/organisations are advised to heighten the prevention and control measures against infectious diseases. Sources of infection could come from staff, visitors or clients (especially those having active symptoms). In this regard, we would like to remind you to reinforce temperature screening in institutions and organisations.

Institutions/organisations should actively check the body temperature of all clients/residents on a daily basis, so as to identify those with fever (oral temperature higher than 37.5 °C, or ear temperature higher than 38 °C). Those with fever or respiratory symptoms should be advised to wear a surgical mask and seek medical advice promptly. Staff should also check their temperature before work every day, and those with respiratory illnesses or fever should refrain from work. Moreover, institutions/organisations are advised to check the body temperature of all visitors, and those with fever are not recommended to visit the institutions. These additional measures



should continue until further notice by the CHP.

Guidelines on prevention of communicable diseases in residential care homes for elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities issued by the CHP can be accessed at the following links respectively:

1. http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_rche_eng.pdf and
2. http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guideline_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_rchd.pdf

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, please kindly remind your staff, visitors and clients to maintain good personal and environmental hygiene:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing.
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and add water to the U-traps regularly to ensure environmental hygiene.
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative.
- Cover mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

The following health advice should be taken when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province where community transmission of novel coronavirus is occurring. If it is unavoidable to travel to Hubei, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in

countries/areas with possible community transmission of novel coronavirus infection. If it is unavoidable to come into contact with them, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;

- Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene;
- Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry/birds or their droppings;
- Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- Do not consume game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served;
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
- If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if experiencing a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and
- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.

Please draw the attention of the staff, visitors and clients in your institutions / organisations to the above. Thank you for your ongoing support in combating communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK Chuang', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

(Dr. SK Chuang)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health