

Stay vigilant against Novel Coronavirus Infection and other infectious diseases
during the Chinese New Year Holiday

Dear Staff and Students,

As the Chinese New Year Holiday is approaching, a lot of you may be travelling outside Hong Kong. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to always maintain good personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel. This is because we are now into the flu season in Hong Kong, and there is an evolving outbreak of Novel Coronavirus Infection in Mainland China.

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) advises the public to avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible transmission of the 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. I believe this is a good practice and can be adopted by all who travel to countries/ areas with possible transmission of the novel coronavirus infection, with or without close contact with symptomatic patients.

If you visited Hubei Province recently, visited a medical hospital in Mainland China recently, or had close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus infection while that patient was symptomatic, please closely monitor your health condition. Should you develop a fever or acute respiratory symptoms, please wear a surgical mask, seek further medical attention promptly, and inform the doctor about your travel history. If you have any inquiries or concerns, you are welcome to contact the UHS at 39172514.

Students and staff are also advised to check their temperature before coming to the campus every day. Those with respiratory illnesses or fever (oral temperature higher than 37.5 °C , or ear temperature higher than 38 °C) should refrain from coming to the campus. They should wear a surgical mask, consult doctors promptly, and inform the doctor of their travel and exposure history.

The University will continue to remain highly vigilant, stay alert, and continue to monitor the latest development and take appropriate prevention and control measures according to the CHP's recommendations.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory infection, university members are advised to:

- 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 secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and add water to 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 hand rub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- 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.

Please also take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside 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 having 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 having 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.

For the latest updates and prevention measures, please refer to the following webpages for more information:

1. [Severe Respiratory Disease associated with a Novel Infectious Agent](#)
2. [HKU's Public Health, Pandemic and Epidemic Disease Preparedness and Response website](#)

Should you have any inquiries, please contact UHS at 3917 2514.

Thank you for your co-operation and support.

May you have a prosperous and healthy Year of the Rat!

Dr M. K. Cheung

Director

University Health Service

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