

KCDC Provides Information on Preventing Infectious Diseases
During Lunar New Year Holiday(Jan.29, 2019)

Contact : Division of Infectious Disease Control (043-719-7120, okpark8932@gmail.com)

- ◇ Those traveling and visiting family within ROK are advised to wash their hands frequently, handle and prepare food properly, and cover their noses and mouths when sneezing and coughing to prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as norovirus and influenza.
 - ◇ Those traveling abroad are advised to check the infectious disease status of their travel destinations before leaving, prepare any necessary vaccinations, medications, and other medical supplies, and monitor their health closely upon returning home.
 - ◇ Please note that the KCDC 1339 Call Center and EOC are available 24/7, all year round. During the holiday period, 24-hour IMS in collaboration with healthcare facilities around the country and campaigns providing information to travelers will be operated to further protect the public from infectious diseases.
-

- The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) advises the public to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves from infectious diseases during the Lunar New Year holiday period (Feb. 2nd to Feb. 6th), especially for those who are traveling both domestically and internationally.
- In the case of domestic travel, individuals who partake in family gatherings are at greater risk of contracting influenza due to close person-to-person contact, as well as foodborne and waterborne illnesses due to the sharing and neglectful handling of foods. Those celebrating the holiday in the Republic of Korea (ROK) are advised to take special precautions against the following infections:

(1) Norovirus

- Norovirus cases are most prevalent from the period of November to April. There has been a steady increase of cases since November 2018.

(2) Influenza

- Influenza cases are most prevalent during the period of November to April. Following the epidemic alert issued on November 16, 2018, the number of influenza cases peaked at the end of December 2018 and has gradually begun to decrease since then. However, precautions should still be taken, as the flu season has still not ended.

□ In the case of international travel, individuals are advised to take special precautions against measles, shigellosis (a type of gastrointestinal infection), mosquito-borne diseases (malaria, Zika virus, dengue), and MERS.

(1) Measles

- Measles cases have been on the rise in Asia (Vietnam, Philippines) and Europe (Italy, France, Greece) since 2017. In ROK, there have been 40 recently confirmed measles cases since December 2018, with the majority of patients either missing their MMR vaccinations or having traveled to measles pandemic countries.
- ROK has a high vaccination coverage rate, which means that there is a low chance of any widespread domestic outbreaks. However, there is still the possibility of sporadic cases due to the importation of the disease from abroad.

(2) Foodborne and waterborne diseases (typhoid, shigellosis)

- There have been ongoing cases of travelers contracting typhoid, shigellosis, and other foodborne and waterborne diseases after traveling to the Philippines and other countries in Southeast Asia.

(3) Mosquito-borne Diseases (malaria, Zika virus, dengue)

- There has been a rapid increase of dengue cases in Indonesia and other countries in Southeast Asia. Outbreaks of Zika virus are also ongoing, as well as imported cases of malaria from Asian and African countries.

(4) Influenza

- Reports of influenza outbreaks are currently increasing throughout countries across the Northern hemisphere. Similar to ROK, North America and East Asia are reporting cases of A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2), and influenzavirus B.

(5) Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)

- There are ongoing cases of MERS in Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East.

☐ Travelers are advised to take the following precautions when traveling abroad to protect themselves from infectious diseases:

- Prior to traveling, check the KCDC webpage at cdc.go.kr for news updates and infectious disease information for your travel destinations and prepare any necessary vaccinations, medications, and other medical supplies as directed.
- While traveling, follow the necessary precautions to protect yourself from infectious diseases. Only eat food that has been cooked properly and, to prevent mosquito bites, use mosquito repellent and wear long sleeves and pants.
- Upon returning to ROK from an infectious disease risk area, you must accurately complete the provided health status questionnaire and submit it to a quarantine officer.
- After returning home, if you experience any suspected symptoms of infectious diseases, such as diarrhea, rash, fever, or coughing, please contact the KCDC 1339 Call Center and follow the provided instructions. If you experience any respiratory

symptoms and must seek medical assistance at a hospital or other healthcare facility, be sure to wear a mask and inform your healthcare provider of your recent travel history.

□ Throughout the Lunar New Year holiday period, KCDC will be operating a 24-hour Incident Management System (IMS) together with healthcare facilities across the country to monitor potential outbreaks of infectious diseases and respond to them rapidly. Campaigns are being held at Incheon International Airport and other national quarantine stations from January 28th until February 1st to inform travelers of necessary precautions to protect themselves from MERS, measles, and other infectious diseases while traveling abroad.