

# Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 18) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From March 10 to 16, two community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A female patient, aged 69 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Block 7, King's Park Villa, 1 King's Park Rise, Ho Man Tin; and
2. A male patient, aged 63 with good past health, who lives in Hill Lodge, 1 Lok Fung Path, Fo Tan.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of March 16, 11 LD cases had been reported in 2019. In 2018 and 2017, there were 105 and 72 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not

water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2  $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
  2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
  4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
  5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

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## **Import of poultry meat and products from Middelfart Municipality in Denmark suspended**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (March 18) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about an outbreak of low pathogenic H7 avian influenza in Middelfart Municipality, Denmark, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products, including poultry eggs, from the area with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that Hong Kong imported about 1 340 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 1 560 000 poultry eggs from Denmark last year.

"The CFS has contacted the Danish authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE on avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

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## **Effective Exchange Rate Index**

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, March 18, 2019 is 103.2 (down 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, March 16, 2019 was 103.3 (down 0.1 against last Friday's index).

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## **Fraudulent website related to DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited on fraudulent website, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the

press release is available on [the HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the website concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the website should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

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## **Travel agent and its salesperson convicted for engaging in bait and switch practice**

A travel agent and its salesperson were fined \$10,000 and sentenced to 80 hours of Community Service Order respectively on March 1 and today (March 18) at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts for engaging in bait and switch practice, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). The travel agent was also ordered to pay the victim \$2,320 in compensation.

Customs earlier received information alleging that a travel agent and its salesperson were suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices in the sale of travel services.

After investigation, it was revealed that the travel agent had sold an air ticket voucher at a discounted price on a group purchase website. When the customer redeemed the voucher, the travel agent and its salesperson refused to provide an air ticket. The customer was allowed to use the voucher only after he purchased a more expensive air ticket and hotel package.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader who offers a service for purchase at a specified price but subsequently, with the intention of promoting a different service, refuses to deliver the service within a reasonable time commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).