

## [Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practice at ginseng and dried seafood shop](#)

Hong Kong Customs today (February 23) arrested a salesman of a ginseng and dried seafood shop suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices involving misleading omission in the sale of pearl, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs officers conducted a test-buy operation at a ginseng and dried seafood shop in Tsim Sha Tsui today. A salesman was suspected to have misled the test-buy officer to believe the unit price of pearl was calculated per tael. After the pearl was ground, the salesman revealed that the goods were priced per mace. The charged amount was 10 times different from expected. Customs officers then arrested the 43-year-old salesman.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminded traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to purchase products from reputable shops. Consumers should also be cautious about the unit price and ask for more information, including the total price of the goods selected, before making a purchase decision.

Under the TDO, any trader who engages in a commercial practice that omits or hides material information and as a result causes, or is likely to cause, an average consumer to make a transactional decision 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)).

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## [Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cannabis buds \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs today (February 23) seized about 10 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds with an estimated market value of about \$2 million in Tsing Yi.

Acting on intelligence, Customs officers intercepted a river trade

vessel arriving from Guangzhou in Tsing Yi and found about 10 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds inside a suitcase on the vessel. A 37-year-old male crew member was arrested.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers further arrested a 34-year-old man suspected to be involved in the case.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

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



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## [Import and sale of raw oysters harvested in zone 56.09.3, Morbihan Department, France suspended](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (February 23) that the import into and sale in Hong Kong of raw oysters harvested in zone 56.09.3, Morbihan Department, France have been suspended with immediate effect.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS received a notification from the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) of the European Commission that raw oysters harvested in abovementioned area in France which were suspected to be contaminated with norovirus was under recall. According to the information provided by RASFF, a local importer, Tasty Seafood and Fine Food Limited, had imported the raw oysters concerned. The CFS immediately

contacted the importer concerned for follow-up and the importer confirmed that it had imported the affected oysters. For the sake of prudence, the CFS has immediately suspended the import into and sale within Hong Kong of raw oysters harvested in the area concerned."

The spokesman said that preliminary investigation by CFS found that 135 kilograms of the affected oysters were imported by the importer and some were distributed. The CFS has instructed the importer to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected product, and initiate a recall. Members of the public may call the importer's hotline at 3590 4849 during office hours to enquire about the recall. The trade should also stop selling the affected product if they possess it.

"As oysters feed by filtering a large volume of seawater, pathogens such as norovirus, chemical contaminants and natural toxins can accumulate in them if they are grown in or harvested from contaminated water. Regardless of the season or the region in which the oysters are harvested, consuming oysters, particularly raw or partially cooked ones, carries an inherent food safety risk. Susceptible groups, such as pregnant women, young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems or liver diseases, should avoid eating raw oysters," the spokesman said.

The CFS will inform the French authorities of the import suspension and notify the local trade. It will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health.

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## **CHP investigates case of invasive meningococcal infection**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 23) investigating a case of invasive meningococcal infection, a communicable disease transmitted by direct contact with droplets from carriers or infected persons.

The case involves a 38-year-old man with good past health, who had presented with sore throat and rash since February 21 and developed fever, headache, neck stiffness since yesterday. He was admitted to Matilda International Hospital yesterday. His clinical diagnosis was meningitis. The patient is now in a stable condition.

His cerebrospinal fluid sample tested positive for *Neisseria meningitidis* upon laboratory testing.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had no recent travel history. His home contact has remained asymptomatic so far. The CHP's

investigation is continuing.

"Meningococcal infection is caused by a bacterium known as meningococcus. It is mainly transmitted by direct contact through respiratory secretions, including droplets from the nose and throat, from infected persons. The incubation period varies from two to 10 days, and is commonly three or four days," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The clinical picture may vary. Severe illness may result when the bacteria invade the bloodstream (meningococcaemia) or the membranes that envelop the brain and spinal cord (meningococcal meningitis).

Meningococcaemia is characterised by sudden onset of fever, intense headache, purpura, shock and even death in severe cases. Meningococcal meningitis is characterised by high fever, severe headache and stiff neck followed by drowsiness, vomiting, fear of bright light, or a rash. It can cause brain damage or even death. The brain damage may lead to intellectual impairment, mental retardation, hearing loss and electrolyte imbalance. Invasive meningococcal infections can be complicated by arthritis, inflammation of the heart muscle, inflammation of the posterior chamber of the eye or chest infection.

Meningococcal infection is a serious illness. Patients should be treated promptly with antibiotics.

To prevent meningococcal infection, members of the public are advised to take heed of the following measures:

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly, especially when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, e.g. after sneezing, and clean hands with alcohol-based handrub when they are not visibly soiled;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing, hold the spit with tissue, dispose of nasal and mouth discharge in a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands immediately;
- Avoid crowded places;
- Avoid close contact with patients who have fever or severe headache;
- Travellers to high-risk areas may consult doctors for meningococcal vaccination; and
- Travellers returning from high-risk areas should seek medical advice if they become ill and should discuss their recent travel history with their doctor.

The public may visit the CHP's [website](#) for more information on meningococcal infection.

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# Government promotes reduced salt and sugar diet

To promote a new reduced salt and sugar dietary culture and living style in Hong Kong, the Food and Health Bureau, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, and the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food (CRSS) jointly held a promotional event entitled Salt & Sugar Reduction Day today (February 23).

Speaking at the launch ceremony, the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said that reduced intake of salt and sugar is the key to good health. She appealed to the public to take good care of their health and support the initiative by consuming less salt and sugar. Adopting a reduced salt and sugar diet does not mean that food becomes tasteless, she said. On the contrary, reduced salt and sugar dishes are tasty if the ingredients and the cooking methods are good.

The Chairman of the CRSS, Mr Bernard Chan, also said at the ceremony that the Committee is encouraging food premises to offer more reduced salt and sugar choices for customers, and food manufacturers to conduct food product reformulation. The progress is gratifying, he said. Apart from the trade, the Committee also needs the support of all members of the public to reduce salt and sugar in food.

Since January this year, more than 500 food premises of various types have participated in this promotional event by providing options of reduced salt and/or sugar in food for customers, while some 70 others have also offered tailor-made less salt and sugar dishes. In the past one month, these food premises have saved a total of about 7 million grams of sugar after customers requested less sugar in their food or drinks. The organiser has used part of this amount of sugar to build a sugar cube pyramid to achieve a world record. The sugar for the pyramid will be used to produce teaching kits to show the sugar content in selected foods. The teaching kits will be distributed to secondary and primary schools.

People can easily recognise the food premises participating in providing reduced salt and/or sugar options or dishes when eating out, as the relevant logos (see attachments) will be displayed in the food premises. In addition, the CRSS launched the "Salt/Sugar" Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products in 2017. The public can readily identify "low salt", "no salt", "low sugar" and "no sugar" products by looking at the labels.

Information on reduction of salt and sugar and healthy diets is available on the designated Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/HongKongsActiononSaltandSugarsReduction](http://www.facebook.com/HongKongsActiononSaltandSugarsReduction)) or Instagram page ([www.instagram.com/hkassr](http://www.instagram.com/hkassr)) of the CFS.