

# CHP investigates four suspected food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 8) investigating four suspected food poisoning clusters affecting 14 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The first cluster involved two males and two females, aged 34 to 43, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea and nausea about 11 to 22 hours after having dinner at home on February 5.

The second cluster involved two males and three females, aged four to 78, who developed similar symptoms about four to 13 hours after having dinner at home on the same day.

The third cluster involved one male and one female, aged 53 to 55, who developed similar symptoms about 15 to 47 hours after having dinner at home on the same day.

The fourth cluster involved two males and one female, aged 54 to 60, who developed similar symptoms about 12 to 19 hours after having dinner at home on the same day.

Eight of the affected persons have sought medical advice and one required hospitalisation. All patients are in a stable condition.

The CHP's preliminary investigation revealed that all affected persons have consumed "Poon Choi" bought from a restaurant in Tuen Mun for the dinner.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;

- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.

Food safety when handling "Poon Choi":

- Avoid early collection. Generally, half an hour to one hour before consumption is preferred. When collecting "Poon Choi", make sure it is kept at above 60 degrees Celsius;
- Read and follow the reheating instructions carefully and properly;
- Before consuming "Poon Choi", should reheat it thoroughly till the core temperature reaches at least 75 degrees Celsius; and
- Use communal chopsticks and spoons during consumption.

More health tips for enjoying "Poon Choi" are available on the [website of the CHP](#).

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## [Travellers sentenced to imprisonment for smuggling agarwood \(with photo\)](#)

Two travellers who smuggled agarwood have been sentenced to imprisonment for 16 months at the District Court today (February 8).

A spokesman of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that Customs officers intercepted two inbound male passengers, aged 51 and 32, at Hong Kong International Airport and seized about 17 kilograms and 24kg of agarwood from their luggage on August 16, 2018.

Upon investigation by the AFCD, the two men were charged with illegal import of an endangered species. They were convicted at the court on February 4. The court handed down 24 months' imprisonment as the starting point for sentencing today. The defendants were each sentenced to 16 months behind bars after one-third reduction as they pleaded guilty.

All species of *Aquilaria* are listed in Appendix II to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. They are regulated under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance.

The penalties under the Ordinance have been drastically increased since May 1 last year. Any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years. The specimens will

also be forfeited upon conviction.

To enquire about the control of endangered species and to report suspected irregularities, the public can call the AFCD at 1823 or visit the website [www.cites.hk](http://www.cites.hk).



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## [Appeal for information on missing man in Tin Sum \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (February 8) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Tin Sum.

Lam Chi-wang, aged 28, went missing after he left his residence in Sha Kok Estate on February 6 night. His guardian made a report to Police yesterday (February 7).

He is about 1.7 metres tall, 55 kilograms in weight and of thin build. He has a square face with yellow complexion and short black hair. He was last seen wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt, grey shorts and brown slippers.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1176 or 5613 6963, or email to [rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.



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## Red tides sighted

Six red tides have been sighted over the past week, an inter-departmental red tide working group reported today (February 8).

One of the red tides was spotted by staff of the Environmental Protection Department on February 1 at Yim Tin Tsai Fish Culture Zone and Plover Cove including Yim Tin Tsai (East) Fish Culture Zone. The red tide has dissipated.

Two of the red tides were spotted by a mariculturist today at Port Shelter including Ma Nam Wat Fish Culture Zone and Silverstrand including Silverstrand Beach, Sai Kung. These two red tides still persist.

The other three red tides were spotted by staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department today at Eastern waters of Lantau Island including Silver Mine Bay Beach and Nim Shue Wan, Pui O Beach and Tong Fuk Beach, Lantau Island. These three red tides still persist.

No associated death of fish has been reported so far in all six red tides.

A spokesman for the working group said, "The two red tides spotted at Port Shelter and Tong Fuk Beach were formed by *Akashiwo sanguinea* whereas the other four red tides were formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*. Both species are non-toxic and commonly found in Hong Kong waters."

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) urged mariculturists at Yim Tin Tsai, Yim Tin Tsai (East), Yung Shue Au, Lo Fu Wat, Ma Nam Wat, Kau Sai, Kai Lung Wan, Tai Tau Chau, Leung Shuen Wan and Cheung

Sha Wan fish culture zones to monitor the situation closely and increase aeration where necessary.

Red tide is a natural phenomenon. The AFCD's proactive phytoplankton monitoring programme will continue to monitor red tide occurrences to minimise the impact on the mariculture industry and the public.

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## CHP investigates suspected food poisoning outbreak at premises in Kwai Chung

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 8) investigating a suspected outbreak of food poisoning at a premises in Kwai Chung, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The outbreak involved 12 males and four females aged 26 to 52 who developed diarrhoea, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and fever about two to 25 hours after consuming food bought from a restaurant in Kwai Fong at the premises on the night of February 4.

Seven of them sought medical attention and one required hospitalisation. All the affected persons are in a stable condition.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and

- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.