

CHP investigates case of invasive pneumococcal infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 10) investigating a case of invasive pneumococcal infection, and reminded the public to observe hygiene practices against the disease.

The patient was a 30-month-old boy, who developed fever, vomiting, choking and convulsion on November 26. He was brought to Caritas Medical Centre for medical attention on the same day and was directly transferred to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit of Princess Margaret Hospital for further management. His condition deteriorated and he died this morning.

His blood specimen tested positive for *Streptococcus pneumoniae* upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was pneumococcal bacteraemia.

Initial enquiries revealed that the boy had received pneumococcal vaccines. He had no recent travel history and his home contacts remained asymptomatic. No other similar cases or outbreaks have been reported so far at the nursery he attended. Investigations are ongoing.

"Pneumococcal infection is caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumococcus). It causes a wide range of diseases. More common ones include middle ear infection and chest infection. It may also cause various forms of invasive pneumococcal diseases, such as infection of the brain membranes and blood stream. The infection can be serious or even life-threatening," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Pneumococci are commonly found in the nose and throat of healthy people, particularly in children. Occasionally, these bacteria will cause an infection. They mainly spread through droplets via coughing and sneezing, close contact with the patients or contact with materials soiled with the bacteria.

To prevent pneumococcal infection, the CHP appealed to the public for pneumococcal vaccination and hygiene practices:

- Keep hands clean at all times. 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 secretion after coughing or sneezing;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly. When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Cover nose and mouth with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of the soiled tissue paper into a lidded rubbish bin, and then wash hands thoroughly;
- Put on a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms;

- Maintain good indoor ventilation. Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks while in such places; and
- Refrain from work or school when having respiratory symptoms. Seek medical advice if symptoms persist or deteriorate.

The public may visit the CHP's [invasive pneumococcal disease page](#) for more information.

Three illegal workers jailed

Three illegal workers comprising one Vietnamese, one Pakistani and one Indian were jailed by Shatin and Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 7 and 8 respectively.

Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators received a referral from the Hong Kong Police Force to further investigate an illegal employment case in September. Enforcement officers arrested one male Pakistani worker aged 23, handling goods in Chek Lap Kok. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

Furthermore, during joint operations conducted by the ImmD, the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed "Champion" on December 3, enforcement officers raided a residential building at Sham Shui Po. One female Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 44, was arrested. When intercepted, she was performing cleaning work.

In addition, during joint operations conducted by the ImmD and the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Champion" on December 5, enforcement officers raided a car park at Kwai Chung. One male Indian illegal worker, aged 33, was arrested. When intercepted, he was conveying goods. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The three illegal workers were charged at Shatin and Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 7 and 8 respectively with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 15 months to 16 months and 25 days.

The spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the

Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. It is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase, and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

[Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today

(December 10) 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 December 2 to 8, two community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A male patient, aged 79 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Chung Hing Mansion, 981A-981F King's Road and 1-13A Pan Hoi Street, Quarry Bay; and
2. A male patient, aged 59 with good past health, who lives in Block East, Miramar Villa, 2B Shiu Fai Terrace, Wan Chai.

"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 December 8, 102 LD cases had been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 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 (μm) 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 the 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 μm 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.

EMSD announces test results of LPG quality in November 2018

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (December 10) announced that the department collected eight liquefied petroleum gas

(LPG) samples from auto-LPG filling stations and LPG terminals on a random basis in November 2018 for laboratory tests. The results showed that the LPG quality of all these samples complied with auto-LPG specifications.

The detailed test results are available on the EMSD's website (www.emsd.gov.hk/emsd/eng/sgi/lpg_smpl_analysis.shtml). Enquiries can also be made to the EMSD's hotline on 2333 3762.

In addition, the EMSD has been vetting independent third-party test reports submitted by LPG supply companies for each shipment to ensure that the quality of imported LPG complies with the specified requirements.

Phishing email related to The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation 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 The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited on phishing email, 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 email concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the email 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.