

# Family doctors play important role in prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

In support of World Family Doctor Day this Saturday (May 19), the Department of Health (DH) today (May 16) called on the public to recognise the crucial role of family doctors in delivering primary care and safeguarding the health of the community, particularly in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

World Family Doctor Day has been celebrated annually by the World Organization of Family Doctors since 2010 to give recognition to the role and contribution of family doctors in healthcare systems around the world. The theme this year is "Family doctors – leading the way to better health".

"Family doctors, as the first point of contact for individuals and families in the healthcare process, are the main provider of primary care, which is the first level of care in the whole healthcare system. They provide comprehensive, continuing, whole-person, co-ordinated and preventive care to individuals and their families to ensure their physical, psychological and social well-being. They also play a key role in the prevention and control of diseases including NCDs," a spokesman for the DH said.

In Hong Kong, five major NCDs, namely cancers, cardiovascular diseases including heart diseases and stroke, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases accounted for about 55 per cent of all registered deaths in 2016. To curb the burden of NCDs, the Government has recently launched "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong" (SAP), which defines nine local health targets to be achieved by 2025.

"One of the initiatives in the SAP is to strengthen the health system at all levels, in particular comprehensive primary care for prevention, early detection and management of NCDs based on the family doctor model," the spokesman added.

To tie in with the annual World Family Doctor Day and further promote the concept of family doctors, the DH and Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), with support from the Hong Kong College of Family Physicians, have jointly produced a five-episode television programme, "My Family Doctor 3", which will be premiered on World Family Doctor Day on May 19.

The drama series features the important role of family doctors in assisting patients to quit smoking and alcohol drinking to prevent diseases, as well as early detection of NCDs including colorectal cancer. It also covers other health topics including food allergies, mood problems and sexually transmitted diseases. The programme will be broadcast on RTHK

Channel 31 at 9.30pm to 10pm every Saturday from May 19 to June 16, and on TVB Jade at 6pm to 6.30pm every Tuesday from May 22 to June 19.

To assist the public to search for primary care providers, the DH since 2011 has set up the Primary Care Directory ([www.familydoctor.gov.hk](http://www.familydoctor.gov.hk)) under which sub-directories of family doctors, dentists and Chinese medicine practitioners are currently available. For more information on the concept of family doctors and primary care, please visit the website of the Primary Care Office of the DH ([www.pco.gov.hk](http://www.pco.gov.hk)).

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## **CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (May 16) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"The obese, the sick, including those with heart disease or high blood pressure, the old and the young are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or late afternoon;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day.

If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the

workplace where practicable, and start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Get into a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index remains high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear loose long-sleeved clothing made of close-woven fabrics;
- Wear a wide brim hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or above. Apply liberally and reapply after swimming or sweating; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

If symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The public may get more information from the DH's Health Education Hotline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.

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## [Assess the risk of heat stroke to employees](#)

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force, they should assess the risk of heat stroke to their employees and adopt effective preventive measures such as providing cool drinking water, setting up temporary sunshade and providing mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion of employees. Employees should drink water regularly and be mindful of their physical condition. If early heat stroke

symptoms such as headache and thirst appear, they should inform their supervisors and seek medical help immediately.

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## **Very Hot Weather Warning issued**

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Hong Kong Observatory has issued the very hot weather warning.

To prevent heat stroke, avoid prolonged activities outdoors.

If engaged in outdoor work or activities, wear a wide-brimmed hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes. Stay in shaded areas as much as possible.

Drink plenty of water, and avoid beverages containing caffeine or alcohol.

If you feel sick, consult a doctor right away.

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## **Fatal traffic accident in Pat Heung**

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Pat Heung this afternoon (May 15) in which a 58-year-old man died.

At about 1.44pm, a heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driven by a 58-year-old man was travelling along Kam Tin Road towards Tai Po. When approaching near Wang Toi Shan Lo Uk Tsuen, it reportedly lost control, dashed to the opposite lane and collided with a bus driven by a 44-year-old woman.

Sustaining serious head injuries, the HGV driver was rushed to Pok Oi Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 2.56pm. The bus driver, sustaining head injuries, was sent to Pok Oi Hospital and later transferred to Tuen Mun Hospital in conscious state. Two male bus passengers, aged 33 and 31 respectively, also sustained minor injuries during the accident and were sent to Pok Oi Hospital in conscious state.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, New Territories North is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to

contact the investigating officers on 3661 3800 or 3661 3819.