

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (June 24) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From June 16 to 22, the CHP recorded three community-acquired LD cases:

1. A male patient, aged 70 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Tai Po District;
2. A male patient, aged 71 with underlying illnesses, who lives in North District; and
3. A male patient, aged 60 with good past health, who lives in Wong Tai Sin District.

"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 June 22, 48 LD cases had been recorded this year. In 2023 and 2022, there were 121 and 80 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; 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 that support breathing. People may become 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; 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.

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â€‹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 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.

â€‹â€‹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.

Launching ceremony for Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency

The launching ceremony for the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency (CCIDA) of the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, restructured from Create Hong Kong, was held today (June 24). The CCIDA also announced at the ceremony the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with three prominent cultural and creative brands from the Mainland, which marks a new chapter for the cultural and creative industries in Hong Kong.

Addressing the ceremony, the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, said, "The launching ceremony marks an important milestone in the development of Hong Kong's cultural and creative industries. It signifies that the CCIDA will take on a new mission. It will foster a better environment in Hong Kong, and adopt an industry-oriented approach to further promote the industrialisation of arts, cultural and creative sectors, dovetailing with the National 14th Five-Year Plan, which aims to develop Hong Kong into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange."

With a view to facilitating more collaboration between Hong Kong brands and the Mainland cultural and creative brands, the CCIDA signed MOUs with three prominent Mainland cultural and creative brands. Among them, two MOUs were signed in Beijing on June 19, which are about the collaboration on the brand "the National Museum of China Innovative" with the National Museum of China (Beijing) Cultural Industry Development Co Ltd, and the collaboration on the brand "the Palace Museum Cultural and Creative Products Hong Kong Space" with the Guangzhou Tai Lai Digitals Cultural Tourism Co Ltd. In addition to a video screening of the two signing ceremonies, an MOU on the collaboration of "Great Wall Cultural Creativity" was also signed at the ceremony with Changcheng Cultural and Creative (Beijing) Culture Co Ltd. The MOUs aim to advance the partnership between the CCIDA and the relevant Mainland cultural and creative brands in areas of market development, promotion and exchanges, with a view to encouraging Hong Kong brands to create more cultural and creative products that feature the characteristics of the National Museum of China, the Palace Museum and Great Wall culture, as well as Hong Kong's unique charms.

The CCIDA will strive to establish an ecosystem that is conducive to the development of the culture, arts and creative industries. In addition to the current support of various programmes, the CCIDA will set up a new dedicated team to actively assist the industry in expanding overseas markets and strengthening the promotion of intellectual property creation as well as production, thereby creating more business opportunities for the industry and enhancing Hong Kong's international standing.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, June 24, 2024 is 106.8 (same as last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, June 22, 2024 was 106.8 (same as last Friday's index).

Man holding charged with murder

Police today (June 24) laid a holding charge against a 59-year-old man with one count of murder.

The man was arrested on June 22 in suspected connection with a murder case happened in Sheung Shui on the same day, in which a 56-year-old woman died.

The case will be mentioned at Fanling Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (June 25) morning.

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will

continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on June 21 to noon today (June 24), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 360 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category, in the past three days (including last Saturday and Sunday). No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 150 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 61 561 samples of food imported from Japan (including 39 879 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 15 142 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.