

CHP appeals to public to take precautionary measures against carbon monoxide poisoning

Following a notification from Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) on a cluster of carbon monoxide poisoning, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (August 28) appealed to members of the public to take precautionary measures against carbon monoxide poisoning.

The cluster involved one male and two females, aged between 11 and 79, who developed symptoms including dizziness and loss of consciousness while cooking with a gas stove at home on August 25. They were immediately sent to QEH and were later transferred to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital for treatment. They are now in stable condition. A preliminary investigation revealed that the range hood of the kitchen was not turned on while all the windows of the flat were closed during the incident.

The CHP has referred the cluster to the relevant department for follow-up. A preliminary investigation revealed that the gas stove operation was in order, but the stove was fitted with an accessory which was not supplied by the original manufacturer. Further testing will be conducted by the relevant department. The incident may have been caused by poor ventilation inside the room leading to an increase in the carbon monoxide level. The CHP said that carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas that is a by-product from incomplete combustion of any fuel that contains carbon.

Exposure to a low concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to a range of symptoms such as dizziness, headaches, tiredness and nausea, whereas exposure to a high concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to impaired vision, disturbed co-ordination, unconsciousness, brain damage or even death.

The CHP reminded members of the public to seek medical attention immediately if they suspect they may be developing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. If a gas stove is in use, attention should be paid to the advice from the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department at the following website:

www.emsd.gov.hk/en/gas_safety/gas_safety_tips_to_users/safe_use_proper_use_and_maintenance/domestic_gas_cooking_appliances/index.html.