

CHP investigates probable case of botulism

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (November 12) investigating a probable case of botulism after a patient received injections of botulinum toxin on the Mainland. The CHP again reminded the public that botulinum toxin injections should only be prescribed and performed by registered doctors.

The case involves a female patient aged 38 with good past health. According to information provided by the patient, she received injections that were claimed to be botulinum toxin from a person at a premises in Dongguan on October 27. However, the patient was unable to confirm the professional qualifications of the person who performed the injections. She has presented with symptoms including limbs weakness, swallowing difficulty and bilateral partial ptosis since October 29. She attended a hospital in Dongguan on November 3 and was admitted the same day. The patient attended the North District Hospital on November 8 due to persistent symptoms and was admitted the same day. She is still hospitalised and is in stable condition. She was clinically suspected to have botulism caused by botulinum toxin injection.

The CHP has reported the case to the relevant authority on the Mainland. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing.

"In Hong Kong, botulinum toxin injections should only be performed by a locally registered doctor. Customers should verify the doctor's full name against the [list of registered doctors](#) of the Medical Council of Hong Kong as well as their professional qualifications and relevant experience. When receiving injections outside Hong Kong, pay special attention to ensure the provider is qualified or registered with relevant jurisdictions for practice. In case of injections offered from suspicious sources, refrain from receiving them. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice from eligible medical professionals as soon as possible," a spokesman for the DH said.

Due to the weakening of associated muscles and the fact that botulinum toxin may spread and affect other areas beyond the injection site, affected patients may have drooping eyelids, double or blurred vision, problems with chewing, hoarseness, or even difficulties in swallowing, speaking or breathing, which may happen hours, days or weeks after the injection.

The DH urged the public to observe the health advice below before receiving botulinum toxin injections:

- Injections in Hong Kong should only be performed by locally registered doctors;
- Understand the procedure, potential risks and complications before receiving injections. Consult a doctor for an informed decision;

- Do not receive injections from suspicious sources;
- Do not receive an injection in the case of a history of allergy to botulinum toxin, or if there is an infection or inflammation on the injection site;
- Request the full name of the doctor in writing if referred by a beauty service provider for the procedure, as well as the professional qualifications and relevant experience; and
- If symptoms develop, such as a fever or feeling unwell, seek medical attention immediately.

The public may visit the DH's webpage on the [differentiation between medical procedures and beauty services](#), the [Drug Database](#) of the Drug Office and the CHP's [botulism page](#) for more information.â€‹