

CHP investigates probable case of botulism

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 24) is investigating a probable case of botulism involving a patient who received injections of botulinum toxin on the Mainland. The CHP 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 a history of good health. According to the patient, she received injections purporting to be botulinum toxin on the Mainland on January 12. However, the patient was unable to confirm the professional qualifications of the person who performed the injections. She presented with symptoms including shortness of breath, palpitations, dizziness and exhaustion on the following day (January 13). She attended North District Hospital and was admitted on January 17. She subsequently developed swallowing difficulties and limbs weakness. She has been in stable condition after treatment and was clinically suspected to have botulism caused by botulinum toxin injection," a spokesman for the CHP said.

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," the spokesman said.

Due to the weakening of the 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 CHP urged the public to observe the following health advice before receiving botulinum toxin injections:

- Injections in Hong Kong should only be performed by locally registered doctors;
- Understand the procedure, potential risks and possible 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 after injections, 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€‹