

# CHP investigates probable case of botulism

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (September 24) investigating a probable case of botulism after receiving injections of botulinum toxin in the Mainland, and again reminded the public that botulinum toxin injections should only be prescribed and performed by registered doctors.

The female patient, aged 28 with good past health, has presented with blurring of vision since September 19, and speech and swallowing difficulties and weakness in the limbs since September 20. She was admitted to the Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital (HKSH) for treatment on September 22 and was transferred to the intensive care unit of the hospital for further management today. She is now in a serious condition. The clinical diagnosis was suspected iatrogenic botulism.

"According to the information provided by the HKSH, the patient received botulinum toxin injections in both calves in the Mainland on September 17. Investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the DH said.

"When botulinum toxin is used for cosmetic purposes, its cosmetic effects after injections are temporary and will gradually disappear. If referred to a doctor for the procedure, customers should look for his or her full name against the [list of registered doctors](#) of the Medical Council of Hong Kong as well as his or her professional qualifications and relevant experience," the spokesman reminded.

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 of the eyelids, double vision or blurred vision, problems with chewing, hoarseness or even difficulties in swallowing, speaking or breathing, which may happen in hours, days or weeks after the injection.

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

- Injections 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 an injection in case of history of allergy to botulinum toxin, or 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 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€‹