

CHP investigates probable case of botulism

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (October 8) investigating a probable case of botulism, and again reminded the public that botulinum toxin injections should only be prescribed and performed by registered doctors.

The female patient, aged 25 with good past health, developed generalised weakness, difficulty in swallowing and shortness of breath since October 3. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) on October 7 and was in a stable condition. The clinical diagnosis was suspected iatrogenic botulism. She subsequently left the hospital without notifying hospital staff members.

"According to the information provided by QEH, the patient received botulinum toxin injection in both calves in the Mainland on October 2. 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 added.

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€‹