

CHP investigates suspected food poisoning case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (September 20) investigating a suspected food poisoning case involving two persons who had eaten porcini mushrooms.

The case involves a male patient aged 61 and a female patient aged 57, who presented with nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and sweating around three to five hours after having dinner with porcini mushrooms cooked at home yesterday (September 19). They sought medical attention at Hong Kong Adventist Hospital – Tsuen Wan on the same day, and the female patient required hospitalisation. The patients are in stable condition.

An initial investigation revealed that the porcini mushrooms were purchased on August 21 at an exhibition in Hong Kong. Investigations by the CHP and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department are continuing.

"Mushroom poisoning is generally acute. Common presentations include gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain appearing shortly after ingestion. Depending on the mushroom species, patients may also have other symptoms like profuse sweating, hallucinations, comas or other neurological symptoms, as well as liver failure. Death may result in severe cases," a CHP spokesman said.

"We advise the public to buy mushrooms from reputable and reliable suppliers and not to buy mushroom products which may be mixed with unknown species. Members of the public should not pick wild mushrooms for consumption as it is difficult to distinguish edible mushroom species from inedible ones. Mixing of edible species with inedible or poisonous species of mushroom will not dilute toxicity. Cooking in most cases does not destroy toxicity," the spokesman added.

"If mushroom poisoning is suspected, the patient should seek immediate medical attention and bring along any available remnant for identification," the spokesman said.