

CHP investigates suspected food poisoning related to calcium oxalate raphide

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 7) investigating a case of suspected food poisoning, and hence reminded the public to beware of vegetables containing calcium oxalate raphide.

The male patient, aged 70, developed tongue numbness and sore throat immediately after consuming a wild plant at home in North District on November 3. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of North District Hospital on the same day and was admitted for further management. He has been in a stable condition and was discharged yesterday. The clinical diagnosis was suspected calcium oxalate raphide poisoning.

Initial investigations revealed that the wild plant the patient had consumed was picked at a hillside near his residence. The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

Plants containing calcium oxalate raphide (a needle-shaped crystal of the chemical) can injure the skin and mucous membranes and cause irritation, such as numbness and burning sensation of the tongue, mouth and lips, and swelling of the tongue and lips. Consumption of vegetables containing calcium oxalate raphide may cause food poisoning.

Members of the public should:

- Not pick and consume wild plants;
- Purchase vegetables from reliable suppliers; and
- Remove any plants mixed with edible vegetables and wash them thoroughly before cooking and consumption.

The public may visit the page on [Calcium Oxalate Food Poisoning](#) of the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for more information and health advice.