

CHP investigates suspected puffer fish poisoning case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 28) investigating a suspected puffer fish poisoning case, and hence reminded members of the public not to consume puffer fish.

The case involves an 84-year-old man who developed dizziness, finger numbness and shortness of breath about one hour after consuming cooked puffer fish, which was caught by himself on that day in local waters, at home on August 25.

He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital in the small hours on August 26 and was admitted for treatment. He is now in stable condition.

Investigations by the CHP are continuing.

A spokesman for the CHP said that consumption of puffer fish is the main cause of food poisoning from tetrodotoxin, which is a potent water-soluble neurotoxin that can affect the central nervous system.

"Organs such as the liver, gonads and skin of puffer fish have high concentrations of tetrodotoxin. Being heat-stable, the toxin does not decompose upon cooking, boiling, drying or freezing. Tetrodotoxin intoxication can cause problems in respiration and circulation, and is potentially fatal. There is no known antidote or antitoxin that can decompose tetrodotoxin. Members of the public are advised to avoid purchasing and preparing puffer fish or unknown fish for consumption to prevent tetrodotoxin-related food poisoning," the spokesman said.