

CHP investigates suspected puffer fish poisoning cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (March 23) investigating two suspected puffer fish poisoning cases, and hence reminded members of the public not to consume puffer fish.

The cases involve two females aged 18 and 45 who developed tongue and lip numbness, dizziness, and limb weakness and numbness from immediately after to about 11 hours after consuming cooked puffer fish eggs, caught in local waters by a friend, at home together on March 21.

Both attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Tuen Mun Hospital today and were admitted for treatment. They are 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. Tetrodotoxin 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.