

CHP urges public not to buy or consume herbal product suspected to contain lead (with photo)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 7) is investigating a lead poisoning case, and appealed to members of the public not to buy or consume a certain herbal product as it may contain lead, which is harmful to one's health.

The CHP received a notification of a lead poisoning case from the Hospital Authority involving a 62-year-old female, who presented with loss of appetite in late September. She was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital from October 12 to 18. Blood tests during hospital admission identified a high blood lead level together with anaemia and liver impairment. Her clinical diagnosis was lead poisoning. The patient was readmitted on October 24. She is in stable condition and has been discharged from hospital.

After receiving the notification, the CHP commenced investigations immediately. The patient reported consuming a herbal product labelled as "Garcinia Cambogia" for several months. She bought this herbal product from an overseas online shop. Testing of the product by the Government Laboratory revealed that the product contains lead. As the herbal product was manufactured in Nepal as labelled, the product has been referred to the relevant department of the Nepal Government for follow-up.

The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

"Lead has no essential function in man, but has a number of adverse effects. Acute exposure to high doses of lead may cause abdominal pain and vomiting. Chronic exposure to lead, depending on the lead level inside the body, is associated with a wide range of health effects, including neurodevelopmental effects, anaemia, high blood pressure, gastrointestinal symptoms, impaired renal function and neurological impairment," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The spokesman strongly urged people who are consuming this product to stop consuming it immediately. They should consult healthcare professionals as soon as possible if they feel unwell or are in doubt.

