

[DH endorses batch recall of mercury-tainted proprietary Chinese medicine \(with photo\)](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (February 3) endorsed Bak Cao Tong (HK) Chinese Herbs Manufacturers and Trading Limited (Bak Cao Tong), the registration holder of a proprietary Chinese medicine (pCm) called [Yuan Heng Tong] Pai Feng Pill (registration number: HKP-02994), to recall from the market one of the batches of the product (batch number: 02994181227) as a sample has been found that the mercury level exceeded the standard formulated by Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong (CMCHK).

The batch recall was conducted as a sample of the above pCm obtained through the DH's market surveillance was found by the Government Laboratory today to contain about 1.75 times the permitted level of mercury under the registration criteria of pCms formulated by CMCHK.

According to the product label, the above pCm is indicated for derangement of vital energy and blood, exhaustion, sores in waists and back as well as insomnia. Preliminary investigations revealed that Bak Cao Tong imported the above batch from the Mainland for external packing in Hong Kong before its distribution to the local market. The DH's investigation is ongoing.

"Prolonged exposure to mercury can damage the neurological system and kidneys. No related adverse events of the concerned product have been received so far," a spokesman for the DH said.

Bak Cao Tong has set up a hotline (2614 3466) for related enquiries. The DH will closely monitor the recall.

According to section 52 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), selling any drug not of the nature, substance or quality demanded by the purchaser is liable to a maximum penalty of a fine of \$10,000 and three months' imprisonment. Upon completion of the investigation, the DH will work with the Department of Justice on prosecution matters and will refer this case to the CMCHK for possible disciplinary action.

Members of the public who have purchased the above pCm should stop using it immediately. Those who have used the above pCm and feel unwell should seek advice from healthcare professionals. People who have the above pCm should submit it to the DH's Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office on 16/F, AIA Kowloon Tower, Landmark East, 100 How Ming Street, Kwun Tong, during office hours for disposal.

