

[DH endorses recall of Chinese herbal medicines contaminated with solanaceous alkaloids by licensed Chinese herbal medicines wholesaler \(with photo\)](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (August 17) endorsed a licensed Chinese herbal medicines (Chm) wholesaler, Kwok Shing Hong Medicine Company Limited (Kwok Shing Hong), to voluntarily recall from the market one batch of Chm, namely Radix Aucklandiae (batch number: 60532110-1 with date of manufacture: June 25, 2022), as it was found to be contaminated with solanaceous alkaloids.

"Regarding the [investigation](#) of two cases of solanaceous alkaloid poisoning announced on August 15, the DH received test results from the Government Laboratory today confirming that the samples of Radix Aucklandiae obtained from The Hong Kong Tuberculosis Association – The University of Hong Kong Chinese Medicine Clinic cum Training and Research Centre (CMCTR) (Wan Chai District) and Haven of Hope – The Chinese University of Hong Kong CMCTR (Sai Kung District) were found to contain solanaceous alkaloids. According to Chinese medicine literature, the Chm concerned does not account for the presence of the solanaceous alkaloids detected," a spokesman for the DH said.

While the DH's investigation is ongoing, upstream tracking thus far has revealed that the samples of Radix Aucklandiae obtained from the above two CMCTRs were of the same batch (batch number: 60532110-1 with date of manufacture: June 25, 2022). According to the information provided by Kwok Shing Hong, the supplier of the above batch of Radix Aucklandiae, the batch of Chm concerned was imported from the Mainland and was supplied to the Hospital Authority (HA)'s CMCTRs and the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs) Chinese medicine clinics locally. For the sake of caution, the DH has contacted the HA and the TWGHs and was informed that their Chinese medicine clinics have stopped dispensing the above batch of Radix Aucklandiae. Kwok Shing Hong will also recall the concerned batch of Radix Aucklandiae from the market. A hotline (2547 1166) has been set up by Kwok Shing Hong for related enquiries. The DH is closely monitoring the recall.

According to the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap. 549), Radix Aucklandiae is a Schedule 2 Chm. Radix Aucklandiae, the Root of Aucklandia lappa Decne, is used to move qi, relieve pain, fortify the spleen and promote digestion.

"Solanaceous alkaloids cause anticholinergic symptoms like blurred vision, dry mouth, dizziness and confusion. Deaths may result in severe cases," the spokesman explained.

According to section 52 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), those who sell 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. The DH will also refer this case to the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong for possible disciplinary action.

Chinese medicine practitioners or Chinese medicine personnel who have the affected Chm in hand should submit them to the DH's Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office at 16/F, AIA Kowloon Tower, Landmark East, 100 How Ming Street, Kwun Tong, during office hours for disposal, or return them to the supplier. Moreover, members of the public who have been given Radix Aucklandiae by the above clinics should stop using it immediately and consult healthcare providers if feeling unwell.

