

CHP investigates case of suspected mad honey poisoning

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 2) investigating a case of suspected mad honey poisoning, and reminded the public to buy honey from a reliable source or apiary.

A 56-year-old male developed dizziness and vomiting around 30 minutes after consuming honey on January 31. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Queen Mary Hospital and was admitted for treatment on the same day due to hypotension and bradycardia. The patient was in stable condition and was discharged yesterday (February 1). His clinical diagnosis was suspected mad honey poisoning.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient consumed home-made honey mailed to Hong Kong by a friend from Nepal. The poisoning might have been caused by grayanotoxin. Investigations are ongoing.

"Mad honey poisoning is caused by ingestion of honey containing grayanotoxins derived from plants belonging to the Ericaceae family, including rhododendrons. Grayanotoxins are neurotoxins which can affect nerves and muscles. Symptoms of poisoning include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dizziness, weakness, excessive perspiration, hypersalivation and paraesthesia shortly after ingestion. In severe cases, hypotension, bradycardia or shock may occur," a spokesman for the CHP explained.

Members of the public are reminded to take heed of the following preventive advice:

- Buy honey from a reliable source or apiary;
- Discard honey with a bitter or astringent taste – grayanotoxin-containing honey may cause a burning sensation in the throat; and
- Pay special attention to honey from India, Nepal and the Black Sea region of Türkiye as there have been grayanotoxin poisoning cases connected with honey from these areas.

Special operational arrangements for GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities during Lunar New Year holidays

â€‹The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (February 2)

announced the special operational arrangements for the GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities during the Lunar New Year (LNY) holidays this year.

In order to enable the public to recycle the recyclables generated during the year-end clean-up, the EPD has specially arranged for all of the 36 Recycling Stores to extend their service hours by three hours (i.e. operating from 9am to 10pm) on February 7. The Recycling Stores will also be opened for six hours (from 11am to 5pm) from February 11 to 13 to provide self-service recycling for the public (no GREEN\$ services). All Recycling Stores will be closed on February 10.

As it is expected that the number of people visiting the Recycling Stores for recycling will increase as the LNY approaches, the department calls on members of the public to pay visits during non-peak hours to shorten the waiting time.

A spokesman for the EPD said, "Although people can still place recyclables into the self-service recycling cage trolleys/receptacles located outside the Recycling Stores (except for GREEN@KAI YIP, GREEN@ON TING and GREEN@TSING YI) beyond the operating hours, they should not leave the recyclables outside the stores or on streets when the recycling cage trolleys/receptacles are full, to avoid impact on the nearby residents and the environment."

As for the 11 Recycling Stations, six of them will be closed from February 10 to 13, while GREEN@EASTERN, GREEN@YUEN LONG, GREEN@SHAM SHUI PO, GREEN@KWAI TSING and GREEN@TAI PO will resume their operations on February 13. During the closure, people can place recyclables into the self-service recycling facilities inside the stations or outside the gates. They can also seek assistance from the security guards stationed at the facilities if needed.

Details of the special operational arrangements for GREEN@COMMUNITY during the LNY holidays are set out in the Annex. Information on the facilities can be found on the website www.wastereduction.gov.hk/en-hk/waste-reduction-programme/greencommunity, or the dedicated Facebook page of individual facilities.

MD announcement (2)

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (February 2) reminded masters, coxswains and

persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.

CFS follows up on aquatic and seaweed products imported from Japan suspected of breaching Food Safety Order

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (February 2) that aquatic and seaweed products manufactured and processed in regulated Japanese metropolis/prefectures were suspected to be in breach of the relevant Food Safety Order when the CFS inspected food imported from Japan. The products concerned have been marked and sealed by the CFS and have not entered the market. The CFS is following up on the cases.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "During inspections of the food labels of the concerned consignments of food imported from Japan, the CFS found two boxes of frozen crab legs suspected to have been processed in Ibaraki Prefecture, five packs of frozen fish roe product and three packs of chilled scallops suspected to have been manufactured and processed in Miyagi Prefecture respectively, as well as two packs of dried seaweed products suspected to have been manufactured and processed in Tokyo respectively, after the Order was issued. The importers concerned are thus suspected of breaching the relevant Order."

According to the Order, all aquatic products originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, are prohibited from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong if they are harvested, manufactured, processed or packed on or after August 24, 2023, including all live, chilled,

frozen, dried or otherwise preserved aquatic products, sea salt, and unprocessed or processed seaweed.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incidents and take appropriate action, including informing the Japanese authorities concerned of the incidents. Prosecution will be instituted against the importers concerned should there be sufficient evidence. The investigation is ongoing.

DH's Yau Ma Tei Integrated Treatment Centre commences one-stop sexual health service for target population

The Department of Health (DH) today (February 2) announced that a one-stop sexual health service for sexual minorities, namely The Commons, will be launched next Monday (February 5) at Yau Ma Tei Integrated Treatment Centre (YMTITC) under the DH's Special Preventive Programme. With the introduction of The Commons, a total of three programmes covering a comprehensive range of services for HIV prevention are under YMTITC, which is located on 7/F, Yau Ma Tei Jockey Club Polyclinic, with the other two being AIDS Counselling and Testing Service as well as Therapeutic Prevention Clinic.

In addition to the provision of screening for HIV and viral hepatitis, sexual health assessment, testing and treatment of specific sexually transmitted infections, The Commons will also proactively identify people in need of counselling, including those who are affected by the practice of high-risk behaviours. Meanwhile, The Commons is committed to maintaining and fostering close collaborations and mutual support with non-governmental organisations, leveraging the efficiency at the primary healthcare level to maximise its impact on disease prevention.

Taking reference from the recommendation by the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the DH has set up The Commons under a person-centred care concept with an aim to catering for the diverse needs of service recipients and delivering a one-stop integrated service. As its name implies, The Commons carries the mission to converge the power of caring and inclusivity from stakeholders, paving and walking the path together with service recipients. The Commons serves to address the overall wellbeing of individuals seeking its services. It is expected that this integrated programme can be tailored to provide appropriate and accessible prevention services to meet the needs of people with high infection risks.

People who are in need of the services provided by The Commons should approach designated organisations for initial assessment prior to referral.

For details of The Commons and designated referral organisations, please visit www.aids.gov.hk/english/itc/consultation.html.

Since the first case of HIV/AIDS was reported in Hong Kong in 1984, the DH has all along been serving its role in conducting surveillance and analysis of the local epidemiology of HIV/AIDS, supporting the development of evidence-based AIDS strategies, as well as offering tailored prevention and care services in both clinical and public health perspectives.

A spokesman for the DH reminded that sexual transmission is the major route of HIV transmission locally. People who have unprotected sex should take an HIV antibody test early and key populations with a higher risk of infection should undergo regular screening of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. The public may visit the Virtual AIDS Office (www.aids.gov.hk) for more information on HIV/AIDS.