

Elderly reminded to take precautionary measures during cold spell

Attention Duty Announcers, Radio and TV Stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals:

With the approach of cold weather, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) reminds the elderly to take precautionary measures during the cold spell. Relatives, friends and neighbours are encouraged to show concern and care for the health of frail elderly persons, particularly those living alone. Those in need may call the SWD hotline at 2343 2255 for assistance.

CHP reminds public on precautions against cold weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 22) reminded the public, particularly the elderly and people with chronic illnesses, to adopt appropriate measures to protect their health in view of the cold weather.

A spokesman for the CHP said that cold weather can easily trigger or exacerbate diseases, especially among the elderly and persons suffering from heart disease, respiratory illness or other chronic illnesses.

"Elderly people have less insulating fat beneath their skin to keep them warm and their body temperature control mechanism may be weaker. Their body may not be able to appropriately respond to the cold weather," the spokesman said.

Some senior persons may have decreased mobility, which can in turn impair their ability to generate and conserve body heat. Chronic illnesses, such as hypertension, diabetes and endocrine disorders may undermine the health of elderly people and lower their metabolic rate, subsequently causing their body to generate less heat. Persons with chronic illnesses such as chronic respiratory illnesses or heart disease are vulnerable to disease aggravation due to cold weather.

The CHP reminded the public, in particular the elderly and persons with chronic illnesses, to adopt the following preventive measures:

- Take note of the weather forecast. Wear warm clothing, including hats, scarves, gloves and socks accordingly;
- Consume sufficient food to ensure adequate calorie intake;
- Perform regular exercise to facilitate blood circulation and heat production;
- Stay in a warm environment and avoid prolonged outdoor exposure;
- Use heaters with care, and maintain adequate indoor ventilation; and
- Seek medical advice if feeling unwell.

In addition, the public should avoid alcoholic beverages.

"Drinking alcohol cannot keep you warm. Alcohol accelerates the loss of body heat through dilated blood vessels, resulting in chilling instead," the spokesman said.

"Parents should ensure that babies are sufficiently warm, but it is also important to keep babies relatively lightly clothed to avoid overheating them," the spokesman added.

Parents should observe the following safety measures when putting their children to bed:

- Keep the room well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature;
- Always place babies on their back to sleep. Leave their head, face and arms uncovered during sleep;
- Babies do not need pillows. Place babies on a firm and well-fitted mattress to sleep. Avoid soft objects, pillows and loose bedding;
- Let babies sleep in a cot placed in the parents' room and near their bed; and
- Maintain a smoke-free environment.

In addition, seasonal influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive seasonal influenza vaccination early. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the [CHP's website](#).

A person who gets influenza and COVID-19 at the same time may be more seriously ill and would have a higher risk of death. Influenza vaccination may reduce the likelihood of hospitalisation and the length of stay. It is important for elderly persons, especially those residing in residential care homes, to receive both seasonal influenza vaccination and COVID-19 vaccination. They should also receive an additional booster against COVID-19 according to recommendations as soon as possible. The public should also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against respiratory illnesses and note the following:

- Surgical masks can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill

persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

Food-borne diseases, particularly those linked to hot pot cuisine, are also common in cold weather. The following preventive measures should be taken:

- Wash hands before handling and consuming food;
- Do not patronise unlicensed vendors or those with poor hygienic standards while selecting food;
- Wash and cook all food thoroughly;
- Vegetables should be washed thoroughly in clean running water before cooking and consumption. When appropriate, scrub vegetables with hard surfaces with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances, including pesticide residues and contaminants, from the surface and crevices;
- Shrimps should be fully cooked until the shells turn red and the flesh turns white and opaque;
- For shellfish such as scallops and geoduck, scrub the shells thoroughly and remove internal organs;
- Most hot pot ingredients should be stored in a refrigerator at 4 degrees Celsius or below, while frozen food should be stored in a freezer at -18 degrees C or below;
- Never use raw eggs as a dipping sauce for hot pot; and
- Use different sets of chopsticks to handle raw and cooked food to avoid cross-contamination.

In addition, when using fuel-burning appliances, especially in indoor areas, the public should ensure adequate ventilation to avoid harmful exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) and prevent CO poisoning.

For more health information, the public may call the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111) or visit the [CHP's website](#) and [Facebook Fanpage](#).

The public may also call Dial-a-Weather (1878 200) or visit the [website of the Hong Kong Observatory](#) for the latest weather information and forecast, or its [page on Weather Information for Senior Citizens](#).

Employers and employees should take precautions during cold weather

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Cold Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Cold Weather Warning is in force, they should take appropriate precautions such as reminding employees who have to work outdoors or in remote areas to wear appropriately warm clothing, and make arrangements for employees to rotate from outdoor to indoor or sheltered work sites as far as possible. Employees should take note of the weather report, wear appropriately warm clothing and be mindful of their health conditions. They should notify their supervisors and seek medical help immediately if feeling unwell, such as having cold limbs and body shivering.

Hong Kong Customs detects dangerous drugs internal concealment case involving passenger at airport (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (January 20) detected a dangerous drugs internal concealment case involving a passenger at Hong Kong International Airport and seized about 1.3 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$1.3 million.

A male passenger, aged 30, arrived in Hong Kong from New York, the United States, yesterday. During Customs clearance, Customs officers suspected that the passenger had dangerous drugs concealed inside his body cavity. He was then escorted to the hospital for examination. Upon examination, a doctor confirmed that foreign objects were concealed inside

the passenger's body cavity. The man was arrested immediately. As at 7pm today (January 21), the arrested person has discharged 116 pellets of suspected cocaine weighing about 1.3kg in total.

The arrested man has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. The case will be brought up at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (January 22).

Following the resumption of normal travel and exchanges with the Mainland and other parts of the world, the number of visitors to Hong Kong has also been increasing steadily. Customs will continue to apply a risk assessment approach and focus on selecting passengers from high-risk regions for clearance to combat transnational drug trafficking activities.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).



[EPD strongly condemns fake news slandering quality of designated bags \(with video\)](#)

Regarding a video clip circulating online claiming that the Environmental Protection Department (EPD)'s designated bags are easily torn, the EPD said today (January 21) that the remarks were entirely defamatory and slanderous, and what were shown in the video was not the designated bags that

are not yet on sale.

The designated bags to be put on sale soon have already passed all tests of relevant international and/or national standards and will not be easily damaged. Relevant tests include: minimum tensile strength, minimum percentage of elongation, puncture and impact resistance.

The Government severely condemns such false news and reminds members of the public that recently there were many rumours with malicious intent to undermine the quality of designated bags. People should be more vigilant to avoid being misled and deceived. The EPD will refer cases with suspected criminal elements to the Police for follow-up investigation.