

# Public should take precautionary measures against carbon monoxide poisoning

Following a notification from Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (PYNEH) on a case of carbon monoxide poisoning, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (January 19) appealed to members of the public to take precautionary measures against carbon monoxide poisoning.

The case involved a 36-year-old woman, who was found unconscious when she had a shower inside the bathroom at home yesterday (January 18). She was sent to Caritas Medical Centre and was later transferred to PYNEH for treatment. She is now in stable condition.

The EMSD conducted site investigation immediately and confirmed that there was no town gas leakage at the scene. The subject gas water heater was installed in 1995. It is a model before the scheme for Approval of Domestic Gas Appliances took effect in 2003 and therefore did not bear a "GU" mark. Investigation revealed serious corrosion at the bottom of the gas water heater, causing the incident. The EMSD seized the subject gas water heater for further investigation.

The CHP said that carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas which is a by-product from incomplete combustion of any fuel which contains carbon, such as wood, natural gas and gasoline.

Exposure to a low concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to a range of symptoms such as dizziness, headache, tiredness and nausea; whereas exposure to a high concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to impaired vision, disturbed co-ordination, unconsciousness, brain damage or even death.

The CHP reminded members of the public that a gas water heater should be used in a well-ventilated area. They should seek medical attention immediately if suspected of developing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

The EMSD also reminded members of the public the following:

1. Occupants should buy and use gas water heater which has been approved by the EMSD and bears a "GU" mark. If the gas water heater was installed before the scheme for Approval of Domestic Gas Appliances took effect in 2003, the occupant should maintain the gas water heater in good conditions and consider replacing the gas water heater with one bearing the "GU" mark;
2. Occupants should arrange regular safety inspection of gas water heater every 18 months by a registered gas contractor. If in doubt of the

condition of the gas water heater, please contact the registered gas supply company at any time; and

3. Occupants should stop using the gas water heater if there is any abnormality (e.g. corrosion or damage of casing) or sign of gas leakage observed. Please contact the registered gas supply company or dealer of the gas water heater to inspect or repair.

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## [CHP follows up on two clusters of Candida auris carrier cases](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 19) following up on two clusters of *Candida auris* carrier cases involving a total of 13 residents from two residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), and reminded members of the public about the proper use of antimicrobials and maintaining personal hygiene against infection.

The first cluster involved ten residents of an RCHE in Prince Edward. The first five cases were related to wards with *Candida auris* outbreaks and confirmed cases in Kowloon Hospital, Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Wong Tai Sin Hospital, and Queen Elizabeth Hospital. After investigations, another five carrier cases of the RCHE were identified. The CHP believed that they were infected at the RCHE. The CHP has immediately conducted investigations and carried out site inspection at the RCHE, and found that the lapses in infection control measures and physical limitations have caused transmission in the RCHE. The ten carrier cases involved seven males and three females aged between 55 and 91 who all have no symptoms of infection. Among them, a 91-year-old female carrier case passed away on December 28 last year due to her underlying illnesses and the remaining nine patients have been discharged. In light of the ten cases, the CHP has contacted the Social Welfare Department and the Community Geriatric Assessment Team of the Hospital Authority to strength the relevant support to the RCHE and assist the RCHE to implement appropriate infection control measures.

The second cluster involved an RCHE in Tsuen Wan with a total of three cases. The first case of this RCHE was a 79-year-old male resident with underlying illnesses, who was confirmed to have carried *Candida auris* during his stay at the Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital and returned to the RCHE afterwards. Subsequent investigations found that two female residents aged 90 and 93 of the same RCHE were confirmed to have carried *Candida auris* upon testing. The CHP cannot rule out that the duo were infected at the RCHE. They are both with underlying illnesses and have no symptoms of infection. One of them has been discharged. Investigations by the CHP revealed that the RCHE has already taken appropriate infection control measures, and the overall hygiene condition is satisfactory. The CHP has reminded the RCHE to continue to strengthen infection control measures.

Investigations revealed that the two *Candida auris* clusters are not epidemiologically linked and the CHP will continue to closely follow-up on them. In addition to the above follow-up measures, the CHP has provided infection control advice and training to staff of the RCHEs. The RCHEs are advised to follow the prevailing guidelines to enhance infection control measures including appropriate placement of carrier residents, strict implementation of contact precautions, enhancement of environmental cleansing and disinfection, use of dedicated medical equipment, toilet and bathing facilities to prevent the spread of *Candida auris*. The CHP will keep in close liaison with the RCHEs concerned and monitor the situation of the residents, and ensure the RCHEs have carried out the various infection control measures.

A spokesman for the CHP explained that *Candida* is a fungus commonly found in the natural environment, particularly in moist and warm environments. In humans, it is commonly found in body sites such as the oral cavity, the digestive tract, skin and the vagina. It is a common fungus living on or in the human body but can occasionally cause infections, especially in individuals with impaired immunity.

Among the different *Candida* species, *Candida auris* is more drug-resistant. Infections vary from being mild to potentially life-threatening or fatal, depending on which part of the body is affected and the general health condition of the patient. The spokesman stressed that proper use of antimicrobials and maintaining personal hygiene, especially hand hygiene, are crucial to the prevention of emergence and cross-transmission of *Candida auris*.

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## [Transcript of remarks by SEE at media session](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, at a media session on enhanced arrangements on promoting municipal solid waste charging at the lobby of West Wing, Central Government Offices, today (January 19):

Reporter: Would you or anyone from the relevant Government departments need to be held responsible for the postponement of this municipal (solid) waste charging scheme? Would this affect the Government's credibility and the waste charging scheme's future rollout? The second question, by postponing the plan until August, what does the Government hope to address specifically, such as the implementation of the scheme with the support of some communities affected by the scheme? Are you confident that you can solve these issues before August? The last question, what is the logic and rationale of allowing the Government to implement the waste charging scheme first? Wouldn't the same problem exist in the scheme when you launch it later? Would pushing the

implementation period and the six-month transition period into the holidays and beyond affect the trash collection efficiency?

Secretary for Environment and Ecology: As I have explained, in this week, I noted many discussions and questions raised by various sectors and the community about waste charging. Many people expressed their concern to me that the general public do not understand how waste charging will be implemented and the related details. I think as a responsible Government, we would like to implement waste charging successfully and smoothly and therefore I believe it is just a responsible act for us to put more time into education so that when we implement waste charging it will be implemented successfully and smoothly. I must also emphasise that we will not only just put more time into publicity and education, but also put forward a new approach, that is, we will put forward demonstrations so that different people, different sectors and the public can actually see how waste charging will be in operation, how it is operated and if you have some minor problems, how they will be resolved, etc. I think it is the best way.

You have asked about (the rationale of) the Government doing it first, will it actually help? I think the answer is certainly. When the Government is going to do it, then we will have real operation cases for people to observe. It is not only for people to observe, we will make use of those demonstrations to take movie (video) and bring the media and the public to look at it so that people can see the real thing and how it operates. People will ease their mind and know the details. I think that will help the implementation of the scheme in the future.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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## [S for S deeply saddened over passing of fireman](#)

The Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, today (January 19) expressed deep sorrow over the death of a fireman, Mr Yau Yiu-man, who passed away while on duty at Penny's Bay. Mr Tang sent his deepest condolences to Mr Yau's family.

Mr Tang said, "The Fire Services Department will make every effort to provide necessary support to help Mr Yau's family through this difficult time."

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# Government supports Hong Kong Arts Development Council's decision on funding arrangement for Hong Kong Drama Awards

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, today (January 19) expressed support for and agreement with the decision of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) regarding the funding arrangement for the Hong Kong Drama Awards.

"Government departments and government-funded organisations are obliged to ensure public funds and resources are used properly, and for supporting projects with appropriate content only. After prudent discussion and review, the HKADC considered the content and arrangement of the 31st Hong Kong Drama Awards not appropriate, and decided to reduce the funding support for that round of the Awards. It is reasonable and legitimate for the HKADC to ensure public funds will only subsidise and support arts programmes with appropriate content. The decision of the HKADC meets the requirement and expectation of the Government," Mr Yeung stressed.

"Whether or not any cultural and artistic programmes should be supported by public funds is a question of the proper use of resources, and has nothing to do with restrictions on creativity. There are opinions that the HKADC's decision will affect or even stifle room for creativity. The Government believes that this is putting the cart before the horse and is confusing to the public. The Government does not agree with such unreasonable remarks," he said.

"The Government firmly supports all government-funded organisations to discharge their responsibilities and ensure the appropriate use of public funds and resources, while promoting the development of arts and culture," he reiterated.