

## **CFS follows up on aquatic product imported from Japan suspected of breaching Food Safety Order**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 18) that an aquatic product manufactured in a regulated Japanese prefecture was suspected to be in breach of the relevant Food Safety Order when the CFS inspected a consignment of food imported from Japan. The product concerned has been marked and sealed by the CFS and has not entered the market. The CFS is following up on the case.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "During an inspection of the food label of the concerned consignment of food imported from Japan, the CFS found two packs of powdered bonito suspected to have been manufactured in Niigata Prefecture after the Order was issued. The importer concerned is 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 incident and take appropriate action, including informing the Japanese authorities concerned of the incident. Prosecution will be instituted against the importer concerned should there be sufficient evidence. The investigation is ongoing.

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## **Hospital Authority and Peking Union Medical College Hospital sign five-year collaborative agreement (with photos)**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) and the Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH) signed a five-year (2024-2029) collaborative agreement yesterday (January 17) to strengthen exchanges and co-operation between the

two parties in the development and management of public hospitals, covering various areas such as hospital management, healthcare services development, healthcare professional development, training of healthcare professionals and management personnel, etc.

The HA Chairman, Mr Henry Fan, and the HA Chief Executive, Dr Tony Ko, led a delegation to visit the PUMCH for two consecutive days and attended the collaborative agreement signing ceremony and exchange on clinical diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases. The two sides signed a five-year letter of intent on strategic co-operation in 2011 to jointly explore innovative models of public hospital management. In order to maintain a close partnership, Dr Ko and the President of the PUMCH, Professor Zhang Shuyang, signed the collaborative agreement for five years yesterday, witnessed by Mr Fan; the Honorary President of the PUMCH, Professor Zhao Yupei; the Secretary of the Party Committee of the PUMCH, Mr Wu Peixin; and the Deputy Director General of the Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Office of the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, Ms Li Wei.

Mr Fan said, "The HA signed a letter of intent for co-operation with the PUMCH for the first time in 2011, and conducted exchanges in various aspects over the years. During the HA's visit to the PUMCH in September last year, we exchanged views on issues of common concern regarding public hospital management and development, and agreed to sign another five-year collaborative agreement between the two sides to lay a solid foundation for future collaborations. The HA proactively ties in with the healthcare policies of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to enhance the collaboration with relevant healthcare and medical institutions on the Mainland, and accelerate the development of public hospitals in order to better integrate itself into the national development."

Professor Zhang recalled that the two parties have established a profound foundation of collaboration through long-term exchanges and looks forward to joining hands again this time to deepen co-operation. "The PUMCH hopes that in the future both places will leverage their respective strengths, focus on needs, meet and liaise regularly, innovate management models, promote exchanges, carry out research collaboration, focus on talent training, and promote exchanges and co-operation between the two parties in a more pragmatic manner."

Mr Fan added that the public healthcare services in Hong Kong and Beijing can learn from each other, and are looking forward to mutual learning and further collaboration in hospital management and services development such as in the area of promoting clinical professional development and exchanges, as well as talent nurturing, etc, so as to jointly enhance the quality and standards of healthcare services of the two parties. The HA will continue to maintain close tie with the healthcare institutions on the Mainland for the well-being of patients.



## CHP investigates case of Shiga toxin-producing E. coli infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 18) investigating a case of Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC) infection, and hence reminded the public to maintain good personal, food and environmental hygiene against intestinal infections.

The case involves a 7-year-old girl with good past health, who presented with abdominal pain on January 3 and diarrhoea on the following day. She attended Gleneagles Hospital Hong Kong on January 5 and was admitted on the same day. She has been in stable condition and was discharged on January 6.

Her stool specimen grew STEC upon laboratory testing.

Initial enquiries of the CHP revealed that the patient had travelled to the Mainland during the incubation period. Her travel collaterals have remained asymptomatic so far. Information from the patient's family members revealed that she did not consume any high-risk food (such as raw meat and unpasteurised dairy products) during the incubation period. Investigations of the CHP are ongoing.

"Escherichia coli (E. coli) is a bacterium that is commonly found in the gut of humans and warm-blooded animals. Most strains of E. coli are harmless. Some strains, however, such as STEC, can produce powerful toxins and cause severe food-borne disease. The most recognised serogroup of STEC is E. coli O157:H7," a spokesman for the CHP explained.

Preventive measures for STEC infection are similar to those recommended for other food-borne diseases. The public are advised to observe good personal and food hygiene:

- Adopt the Five Keys to Food Safety in handling food, i.e. Choose (choose safe raw materials), Clean (keep hands and utensils clean), Separate

(separate raw and cooked food), Cook (cook thoroughly) and Safe Temperature (keep food at a safe temperature) to prevent food-borne diseases;

- Wash hands properly with liquid soap and water before handling food, after handling raw meat or poultry and before eating, and after going to the toilet or changing diapers;
- Cook food and boil water thoroughly before consumption. When cooking or reheating, the core temperature of the food should reach at least 75 degrees Celsius;
- Avoid consumption of unpasteurised milk or undercooked food; and
- Consult your doctor immediately if you have symptoms of STEC infection, particularly bloody diarrhoea.

The public may visit the CHP's [STEC page](#) for more information.

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## **Cluster of COVID-19 cases and cluster of chickenpox cases in Kwai Chung Hospital**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Kwai Chung Hospital (KCH) made the following announcement today (January 18):

A 26-year-old male patient who tested positive for COVID-19 was admitted to a male psychiatric ward of KCH on January 12. Subsequently, nine patients (aged 18 to 87) in the same male psychiatric ward have been presenting with fever or respiratory symptoms since January 14 and tested positive for COVID-19. All 10 patients are being treated in isolation and are in stable condition. Admission and visiting arrangements to the ward have been suspended.

Moreover, two patients aged 25 and 32 hospitalised in a male ward of Learning Disabilities have been presenting with rashes or vesicles since January 15 and were confirmed to have chickenpox infection after viral tests were arranged. The patients concerned are being treated in isolation and are in stable condition. In addition, a staff member in the ward has presented with a rash and vesicles since yesterday (January 17). The staff member concerned has been on sick leave starting today. The KCH Infection Control Team conducted contact tracing upon notification of the cases. The hospital has started informing contacts and arranging antibody testing for individuals who either had not received chickenpox vaccines in the past or are unsure of their infection history of Varicella Zoster Virus, in order to assess the

needs of medical surveillance or isolation. Admission to the ward concerned has been suspended.

A thorough cleaning and disinfection have been conducted in the wards concerned, while infection control measures have been enhanced. The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation of the patients. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

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## **HKMA alerts public to an online video purported to be interview with HKMA Chief Executive**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today (January 18) urged members of the public to remain vigilant against an online video purported to be a media interview with the Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Eddie Yue, on an investment item. The HKMA clarified that the related content and remarks are all fake.

The public should disregard any information disseminated on suspicious websites or social media pages. For the HKMA's latest news and work priorities, please visit the official website ([www.hkma.gov.hk](http://www.hkma.gov.hk)).

The incident has been reported to Police for follow up.