

## CS visits Legal Aid Department

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, visited the Legal Aid Department today (July 23) to learn more about the work of the department and meet its staff.

Mr Cheung started his visit by meeting the Director of Legal Aid, Mr Thomas Kwong, and other senior officers of the department. They shared with Mr Cheung the services provided to the public, the work of various divisions and the challenges ahead.

Accompanied by Mr Kwong, Mr Cheung toured the Legal and Management Support (LMS) Section under the Policy and Administration Division. The LMS Section is mainly responsible for providing information technology and management support to the department, assessing bills of costs submitted by assigned lawyers, attending legal aid taxation hearings and conducting enforcement proceedings for the recovery of judgment debts and costs in legally aided cases.

Mr Cheung then visited the Litigation Division to find out more about the litigation services provided for aided persons whose cases have been assigned in-house. At the Crime Section, he was briefed on the processing of criminal legal aid applications and handling of criminal litigation, and the operation of the Remote Official Visit System. The System allows the officers to interview inmates at the Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre through a video conferencing system in the interview room.

He was also given a tour of the Application and Processing Division to understand how the front-line staff of the Information and Application Services Unit met with the public and handled their enquiries on matters related to the procedures for applying for legal aid. He received a briefing from officers on the processing of legal aid applications and the assessment of applicants' eligibility for civil legal aid on the basis of prescribed means and merits tests.

The responsibilities for formulating legal aid policy and housekeeping the department have been transferred to the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office since July 1, 2018.

Mr Cheung emphasised that legal aid services are the cornerstone of the rule of law in Hong Kong. He thanked the department for its efforts in providing quality legal aid services to the public as well as its commitment to ensuring that any person who has reasonable grounds for taking or defending a legal action will not be denied access to justice because of a lack of means. He was pleased to note that the department has also been working closely with the legal profession and other stakeholders with a view to enhancing its legal aid services. He encouraged colleagues of the Legal Aid Department to keep up their professionalism and dedication to serve the public.

---

## **CHP investigates suspected food poisoning case related to wild mushrooms**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (July 23) investigating a suspected case of food poisoning related to the consumption of wild mushrooms, and urged the public not to pick and eat wild mushrooms.

The 49-year-old female patient developed symptoms including abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhoea about two hours after consuming mushrooms at home yesterday (July 22). She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of United Christian Hospital on the same day. She is now in a stable condition.

Initial investigations revealed that the wild mushrooms consumed by the patient were picked from the hillside near Choi Tak Estate in Kwun Tong on July 21. The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

"Members of the public should not pick wild mushrooms for consumption as it is difficult to distinguish edible mushroom species from inedible ones," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Mushroom poisoning is generally acute. Common presentations include gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain appearing shortly after ingestion. Depending on the mushroom species, patients may also have other symptoms like profuse sweating, hallucination, coma or other neurological symptoms, as well as liver failure. Death may result in severe cases," he added.

"If mushroom poisoning is suspected, the patient should seek immediate medical attention and bring along any available remnant for identification," the spokesman said.

---

## **DH reiterates that supply of DTaP-IPV Vaccine is stable**

In response to media enquiries on the situation of local children receiving Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis and Inactivated Poliovirus

Vaccine (DTaP-IPV Vaccine) (4-in-1 combination vaccine), a spokesman of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 23) reiterated that the current local supply of the vaccine concerned remains stable.

Under the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme, the Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) of the Family Health Service (FHS) under the DH provide various vaccinations for eligible children, including DTaP-IPV Vaccine. Since April 1, 2016, the DH has implemented measures to accord priority of child health services to local children in its MCHCs. A quota has also been set for Non-eligible Persons (NEPs) at 120 new cases per month. The DH has signed a contract with vaccine suppliers which ensures sufficient vaccines to provide vaccination services for eligible local children and NEPs under the quota system.

In Hong Kong, 5-in-1 combination vaccines (containing diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis and Haemophilus influenzae type b vaccine components) and 6-in-1 combination vaccines (containing the 5-in-1 vaccine plus hepatitis B vaccine components) are also available in the private healthcare sector.

The Drug Office of the DH has been in close liaison with the two local suppliers of the vaccines concerned to Hong Kong and learnt that the supply of the three types of vaccines concerned remains stable. The DH, together with the vaccine suppliers, will continue to closely monitor the supply of the vaccines concerned in both the public and private healthcare sectors locally.

In order to achieve good and lasting protection, a child should receive three doses of DTaP-IPV vaccine in the first year of life (at 2 months, 4 months and 6 months), and a booster dose at 18 months. Two other doses will be given to Primary One students and Primary Six students\*. DTaP-IPV can be given with other vaccines.

\* Diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (reduced dose) and inactivated poliovirus vaccine is recommended for Primary Six students.

For more frequently asked questions on the 4-in-1 combination vaccine, the public may refer to the website of the FHS of the DH at [www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health\\_info/child/485.html](http://www.fhs.gov.hk/english/health_info/child/485.html).

---

**[Task Force on Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education launches public](#)**

# consultation on preliminary recommendations

The Task Force on Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education released a consultation document today (July 23) to solicit views from members of the public on its preliminary recommendations.

To follow up on the announcement in the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address, the Education Commission set up the Task Force on December 1, 2017, to review the existing approach and practices in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, in order to formulate the direction and strategy for enhancing both. In the past several months, the Task Force has studied local and overseas research and the existing approach and practices on promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, and proposed preliminary directions, strategies and improvement measures.

The Chairman of the Task Force, Mr Tim Lui, said, "It is the view of the Task Force that the promotion of parent education and home-school co-operation should be more comprehensive and strategic. We suggest that school-based, community-based and territory-wide parent education programmes should be provided. Diversified and innovative modes should also be adopted, such as e-learning and parent education programmes provided in the workplace.

"Other suggestions include launching a 'Happy Kids Campaign' to advocate the healthy and happy development of children and avoidance of excessive competition, and further strengthening the roles of Parent-Teacher Associations and Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations."

To ensure the quality of parent education, the Task Force also recommended that a curriculum framework on parent education should be developed to cater for the needs of parents of students at different school levels from kindergarten to secondary.

The consultation document has been uploaded to the website of the Education Bureau: [www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/press/consultation/index.html](http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/press/consultation/index.html). Members of the public are welcome to send their written comments by post (Secretariat of the Task Force on Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education, Home-school Cooperation Section, Room W215, Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon), by email ([hsc@edb.gov.hk](mailto:hsc@edb.gov.hk)) or by fax (2391 0470) on or before September 14, 2018.

Having conducted a series of consultation sessions to collect views from the key stakeholders, the Task Force will hold three more identical consultation sessions to collect views from the public. Details are set out below:

Session 1

Date: August 3 (Friday)

Time: 9.30am to 11am

Venue: Room WP01, Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon

Medium: Cantonese

#### Session 2

Date: August 4 (Saturday)

Time: 2.30pm to 4pm

Venue: Room WP01, Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon

Medium: Cantonese

#### Session 3

Date: August 9 (Thursday)

Time: 6.30pm to 8pm

Venue: Room WP01, Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon

Medium: Cantonese (with simultaneous interpretation in English)

Reservations for seats at the public consultation sessions can be made on a first-come, first-served basis on the website of the Education Bureau ([www.edb.gov.hk/en/student-parents/consultation-tfhcpe/index.html](http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/student-parents/consultation-tfhcpe/index.html)) and the parent education website "Smart Parent Net" ([www.parent.edu.hk](http://www.parent.edu.hk)), by email ([hsc@edb.gov.hk](mailto:hsc@edb.gov.hk)) or by fax (2391 0470).

---

## [Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 23) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From July 15 to 21, five community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A male patient, aged 56 with good past health, who lives in Yan Wah House, Yan Tsui Court, Chai Wan;
2. A male patient, aged 85 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Tsuen Wing Lau, Lai Tak Tsuen, Wan Chai District;
3. A male patient, aged 70 with good past health, who lives in Block F, Hang Chien Court, 21 Wai King Street, To Kwa Wan;
4. A male patient, aged 88 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Lee

- Cheung House, Shun Lee Estate, Kwun Tong; and
5. A male patient, aged 81 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Mei Fai House, Yue Fai Court, Aberdeen.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of July 21, 47 LD cases have been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using these devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not tap water. Also, clean and maintain them regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2

micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;

- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute the infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow medical advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile (not distilled or tap) water to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2- $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  2. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
  3. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
  4. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.