

## [Fresh beef sample found to contain sulphur dioxide](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (November 28) that a fresh beef sample was found to contain sulphur dioxide, a preservative which is not permitted to be used in fresh meat. The CFS is following up on the incident.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS, under its routine Food Surveillance Programme, took the fresh beef sample from a fresh provision shop (FPS) at Homantin Market in Kowloon City for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained sulphur dioxide at a level of 838 parts per million. The CFS is following up with the FPS concerned about the irregularity."

According to the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD), it is an offence to add sulphur dioxide to fresh or chilled meat. The maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and six months' imprisonment.

Sulphur dioxide is a preservative which can be used in a variety of foods including dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables and salted fish products, but under the Regulation it is not permitted in fresh or chilled meat. Individual meat traders have been found illegally using sulphur dioxide to make meat look fresher. Sulphur dioxide is water-soluble, and most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headaches and nausea after consumption.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to comply with the law and not to sell fresh or chilled meat adulterated with sulphur dioxide. Members of the public should purchase meat from reliable market stalls or FPSs. They should avoid buying or consuming meat which is unnaturally red and maintain a balanced diet to avoid malnutrition or excessive exposure to chemicals from a small range of food items.

â€‹The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. The investigation is ongoing.

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## [Youth Development Commission convenes 17th meeting](#)

â€‹The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, chaired the 17th meeting of the Youth Development Commission (YDC) today (November 28).

At the meeting, members were briefed by government representatives on initiatives relating to youth development in "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address". Members support the Government's sustained efforts in promoting youth development, and were pleased to note that the Policy Address has introduced a series of measures to expand spaces and network for youths and strengthen the support for young people to develop their potential.

Apart from implementing at full steam the various youth initiatives in the Youth Development Blueprint (Blueprint), the Government is planning to set up different youth facilities to provide more physical spaces for young people, including a "Youth Post" hostel and spaces for culture, arts and sports exchange in the Kai Tak Community Isolation Facility, a physical platform for members of the Youth Link in the Nam Cheong District Community Centre, conversion of part of the Youth Square to establish a new interactive space and a video studio. Moreover, in order to support young people in their search of future direction, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau will also launch a new round of the Funding Scheme for Youth Life Planning Activities to sponsor non-governmental organisations in providing enhanced support services with more content relating to national affairs.

Mr Chan said, "The new Policy Address demonstrates the Government's unwavering commitment to promoting youth development on a long-term and ongoing basis. The Government will continue to work closely with the YDC and bring together all sectors of society to take forward the various youth development measures stated in the Policy Address and the Blueprint, and create more opportunities for young people to thrive."

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## [CFS finds malachite green in grilled eel sample](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (November 28) announced that malachite green was found in a grilled eel sample. The CFS is following up on the incident.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected the above-mentioned grilled eel sample from a food premises in Central for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained malachite green at a level of 1.4 parts per billion."

The spokesman said that the CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to stop selling the affected product. The CFS is also tracing the source and distribution of the product concerned.

Malachite green is a type of industrial dye and has been used for treating infections in fish. Currently, malachite green has been prohibited for use in food-producing animals in many countries. According to the Harmful

Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF), no food sold in Hong Kong is allowed to contain malachite green. Offenders will be prosecuted and liable to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. An investigation is ongoing.

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## **CHP investigates probable case of botulism**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (November 28) is investigating a probable case of botulism involving a patient who received injections of botulinum toxin on the Mainland. The CHP reminded the public that botulinum toxin injections should only be prescribed and performed by registered doctors.

The case involves a male patient aged 55 with a history of good health. According to the patient, he received injections purporting to be botulinum toxin at a friend's home on the Mainland on November 3. However, the patient was unable to confirm the professional qualifications of the one who performed the injections. He presented with symptoms including double vision, drooping eyelids, dysphonia, problems with chewing and swallowing on November 17. He visited Hong Kong Adventist Hospital – Tsuen Wan on November 19 and was admitted the same day. He was clinically suspected to have botulism caused by botulinum toxin injection and was discharged after treatment.

The CHP has reported the case to the relevant authority on the Mainland. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing.

"In Hong Kong, botulinum toxin injections should only be performed by a locally registered doctor. Customers should verify the doctor's full name against the [list of registered doctors](#) of the Medical Council of Hong Kong as well as their professional qualifications and relevant experience. When receiving injections outside Hong Kong, pay special attention to ensure the provider is qualified or registered with relevant jurisdictions for practice. In case of injections offered from suspicious sources, refrain from receiving them. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice from eligible medical professionals as soon as possible," a spokesman for the DH said.

Due to the weakening of associated muscles and the fact that botulinum toxin may spread and affect other areas beyond the injection site, affected patients may have drooping eyelids, double or blurred vision, problems with chewing, hoarseness, or even difficulties in swallowing, speaking or breathing, which may happen hours, days or weeks after the injection.

The DH urged the public to observe the health advice below before receiving botulinum toxin injections:

- Injections in Hong Kong should only be performed by locally registered doctors;
- Understand the procedure, potential risks and possible complications before receiving injections. Consult a doctor for an informed decision;
- Do not receive injections from suspicious sources;
- Do not receive an injection in the case of a history of allergy to botulinum toxin, or if there is an infection or inflammation on the injection site;
- Request the full name of the doctor in writing if referred by a beauty service provider for the procedure, as well as the professional qualifications and relevant experience; and
- If symptoms develop after injections, such as a fever or feeling unwell, seek medical attention immediately.

The public may visit the DH's webpage on the [differentiation between medical procedures and beauty services](#), the [Drug Database](#) of the Drug Office and the CHP's [botulism page](#) for more information.â€‹

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## **[SED attends PISA Governing Board Meeting in Croatia \(with photos\)](#)**

The Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, attended the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Governing Board Meeting organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on November 27 and 28 (Dubrovnik time) to discuss the current status of and future planning for PISA with representatives from other regions.

At the meeting, Dr Choi received updates on PISA's progress, including preparations for the PISA 2025 Innovative Domain Learning in the Digital World, and development of the PISA 2029 Framework for Artificial Intelligence and Media Literacy.

Dr Choi said that Hong Kong has been participating in PISA since 2002. Its data has provided an invaluable source for the Education Bureau over the years to analyse students' strengths and weaknesses, and factors related to learning effectiveness. PISA supports the bureau to examine, evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the education system, and provides education practitioners with analyses on the effectiveness of school-level learning and teaching.

She said that PISA's cross-cultural and longitudinal comparisons are particularly inspiring. They provide scientifically based evaluations of educational outcomes to benchmark students' performance against the international norm and chart the progress over time. Hong Kong students have consistently performed well in PISA. Results have shown that family background and socio-economic status have minimal bearing on the students' performance, reflecting the distinctive advantage of Hong Kong's education system, which offers students an equal opportunity to receive quality education.

During the meeting, Dr Choi met the Minister of Science, Education and Youth of Croatia, Professor Radovan Fuchs, to discuss further strengthening higher education co-operation between Hong Kong and Croatia, and exchange views on the developments of vocational and professional education and training, and universities of applied sciences. Dr Choi also met education officials from Kyrgyzstan, Argentina and the Philippines to discuss higher education collaboration. She encouraged students from these Belt and Road countries to apply for the Belt and Road Scholarships established by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, and study in Hong Kong.

Dr Choi also visited the Dubrovnik School of Tourism and Hospitality, a vocational training institution for secondary school students, to see for herself how the school enhances students' skills and expertise in tourism and hospitality industries through providing various work-based learning opportunities.

On November 29 (Dubrovnik time), Dr Choi will speak at the PISA Conference to promote Hong Kong's education strengths.



