

CHP investigates suspected food poisoning case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 15) investigating a suspected food poisoning case involving a person who had eaten porcini mushrooms.

The case involves a male patient aged 76, who presented with diarrhoea, vomiting and dizziness around four hours after having lunch with packaged porcini mushrooms without trademark purchased in Yunnan, Mainland earlier and cooked at home on April 6. He sought medical attention at the Accident and Emergency Department of Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, and was admitted on the same day. He was in stable condition, and was discharged after treatment.

The CHP's investigation revealed that the uncooked mushroom samples found in the patient's home contained not only edible species, but also mixed with, over a half, inedible/poisonous species containing gastrointestinal irritant that lasts even after cooked, which may cause discomfort to consumers.

According to the patient, he had participated a tour group to Yunnan, Mainland from December 21, 2023 to January 2, 2024 organised by a local travel agency, during which he bought two packages of the concerned porcini mushrooms from a shop near Sifang Street, Lijiang. The CHP has notified the case to the relevant authority of the Mainland, and will continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action to safeguard public health.

A CHP spokesman appealed to members of the public who have purchased porcini mushrooms at the above time and place should avoid consuming the relevant product. If mushroom poisoning is suspected, the patient should seek immediate medical attention and bring along any available remnant for identification.

"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, hallucinations, comas or other neurological symptoms, as well as liver failure. Death may result in severe cases," the spokesman said.

Also, the CHP recommended members of the public to take note of the following when choosing or consuming mushrooms locally or overseas:

- Do not buy mushroom products which are doubted to have carried mixing of unknown species;
- Buy mushrooms from reputable and reliable suppliers and not to buy mushroom products which may be mixed with unknown species. Do not pick

wild mushrooms for consumption as it is difficult to distinguish edible mushroom species from inedible ones.

- Do not buy mushrooms which look unhygienic (with growing substrates left with the product) or show signs of spoilage (with coloured spots/abnormal smell/slime, etc); and
 - Wash and cook mushrooms thoroughly before consumption.
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DH urges public to be alert to fraudulent advertisements on government dental services

The Department of Health (DH) today (April 15) alerted members of the public to fraudulent advertisements published on social media and online platforms on free government dental care services.

The fraudulent advertisements concerned, carrying the DH and the Centre for Health Protection logo, claimed that the Government will provide free dental care services for persons aged 6 to 70. The DH clarified that it has never published or authorised to publish such advertisements, and the remarks in the advertisements are all fictitious. The DH has reported the case to the Police.

The Government currently subsidises elderly to use private healthcare services including dental services through Elderly Health Care Voucher. At the same time, the Government provides subsidies covering dental services to elderly persons with financial difficulties, including the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme funded by the Community Care Fund and the dental grant under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme. The Government provides free dental services limited to the management of dental emergencies for the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to any suspicious websites or unknown persons via the advertisements should contact the Police.

Updates on cluster of Methicillin-

resistant Staphylococcus aureus cases in Kwong Wah Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority.

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) carriers in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the spokesperson for Kwong Wah Hospital made the following updates today (April 15):

In accordance with the prevailing infection control guidelines, the hospital has enhanced its surveillance and one more patient, an 18-day-old boy, was confirmed as an MRSA carrier without clinical symptoms. The patient is in stable condition and is being treated in isolation.

The hospital has performed enhanced medical surveillance and screening of the patients in the NICU. The following infection control measures have been stepped up according to established guidelines:

1. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the NICU, including the environment, incubators, equipment and instruments;
2. Enhanced medical surveillance of the patients and environmental screening procedures in the NICU; and
3. Applied stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff. Family members are reminded that infection control measures must be implemented when visiting their babies.

The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for follow-up.

SED to visit Malta and Germany

The Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, will visit Malta and Frankfurt, Germany, from April 16 (Malta time).

In Malta, Dr Choi will attend the Programme for International Student Assessment Governing Board Meeting, speak at a related forum and discuss education issues with participating officials from other regions. She will also visit local schools and meet education experts.

Dr Choi will depart for Frankfurt on April 20 (Malta time) to learn about the local developments in vocational and professional education and training, and exchange views with Hong Kong students studying there.

Dr Choi will conclude her visits and return to Hong Kong on April 23 (Germany time). During her absence, the Under Secretary for Education, Mr Sze Chun-fai, will be the Acting Secretary for Education.

[Hong Kong Customs and Centre for Food Safety join hands to continue vigorously combating illegal importing or smuggling of regulated food](#)

Hong Kong Customs and the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (April 15) stated that both departments will continue to work closely in combating the illegal import or smuggling of regulated food on all fronts.

After the resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland since February 6, 2023, Customs has detected about 400 cases of illegal imports of regulated food in the first quarter of this year, which amounts to about 40 per cent of the approximately 1 100 similar cases detected last year. This reflects that there has been an increasing trend in this type of case recently. Of the cases detected by Customs, more than 80 per cent were detected from incoming passengers. No large-scale regulated food smuggling cases have been detected during the same period.

The CFS said illegally imported food may come from unknown sources and may not be under regulatory control, making it difficult to guarantee the safety of consumption. Also, the food concerned might have been exposed to dangerous temperatures and environments with unsatisfactory hygiene during the smuggling or delivery process, largely increasing food safety risks and threatening the health of the public.

With the Labour Day Golden Week approaching, Customs and the CFS reminded members of the public not to import regulated food illegally from the Mainland or overseas for the sake of convenience. It is best to avoid criminal liability and not affect one's health.

According to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK), it is an offence to bring any game, meat, poultry or eggs into Hong Kong without a health certificate issued by an issuing entity of the place of origin and/or without prior written permission granted by the FEHD. An offender shall be liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months.

Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of

importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Customs and the CFS will maintain close co-operation, while joint operations will be conducted to combat illegal food import activities.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling 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).