

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (April 19) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From April 10 to 16, three community-acquired LD cases were reported:

1. A male patient, aged 52 with underlying illnesses, who lives in 276 Shan Liu Road, Tai Po;
2. A female patient, aged 73 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Shek Tsui House, Shek Wai Kok Estate, Tsuen Wan; and
3. A male patient, aged 76 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Block A, Sunway Gardens, Quarry Bay.

"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 April 16, 15 LD cases had been reported this year. In 2021 and 2020, there were 69 and 104 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 become 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 humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not

water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. 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 consumption;
- 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 (μm) 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 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 doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device 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 μm filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
 2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

â€‹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.

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[Education Bureau alerts public to fraudulent emails](#)

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (April 19) reminded members of the public to stay alert to fraudulent emails purporting to be sent by the EDB from "procurement@edb.govhk.com", an email address with a domain similar to that of the EDB (@edb.gov.hk). The sender claimed to be an EDB staff member and invited vendors to provide quotations for some products.

A spokesman for the EDB clarified, "The EDB has no connection with the fraudulent email. Members of the public and vendors are reminded not to click on the links of any suspicious email, provide any of their personal and bank information through such links, nor make any payment. The EDB has reported the incident to the Police."

[Missing man in Kowloon City located](#)

A man who went missing in Kowloon City has been located.

Lam Shui-hin, aged 53, went missing after he was last seen at a caring centre on Prince Edward Road West on April 4 morning. Staff of the caring centre made a report to Police on the next day.

The man was located on South Wall Road in Kowloon City in the early morning of April 17. He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

[Chair appointed to the National Mental Capacity Forum](#)

The Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Care are pleased to announce that Dr Margaret Flynn has been appointed Chair of the National Mental Capacity Forum.