

# CHP investigates case of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 9) investigating a case of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus (HEV) and urged members of the public to be vigilant against hepatitis E infection and to strictly observe good personal, food and environmental hygiene.

The case involves a 43-year-old man with underlying illnesses, who had presented with liver function derangement since May this year. He has been in a stable condition all along and no hospitalisation is required. His blood sample tested positive for rat HEV upon laboratory testing.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations revealed that the patient resided in Kwai Tsing district. He could neither recall having direct contact with rodents or their excreta, nor had noticed rodents in his residence. He had travelled to Shenzhen during the incubation period.

"Based on the available epidemiological information, the source and the route of infection could not be determined. The CHP's investigation is ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"The CHP has already informed the Pest Control Advisory Section of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department about the case to carry out rodent control measures and a survey as appropriate," the spokesman added.

The exact mode of transmission of rat HEV to humans is unknown at the moment. Possible routes of transmission include ingestion of food or water contaminated by rodents or their excreta, exposure to environments or objects contaminated by rodents or their excreta and direct contact with rodents or their excreta. The usual HEV causing human infection is transmitted mainly through the faecal-oral route.

To prevent hepatitis E infection, members of the public should maintain good personal, food and environmental hygiene. For example, they should wash hands thoroughly before eating, store food properly or in the refrigerator, not leave food at room temperature for a long time, and use 1:99 diluted household bleach for general household cleaning and disinfection as household detergent may not be able to kill HEV. High-risk individuals, such as elderly persons with a major underlying illness (especially those who have undergone organ transplantation), pregnant women, patients with chronic liver disease and patients with Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency (also known as G6PD Deficiency), who are infected with HEV may develop a serious illness, so they should exercise extra caution.

The Five Keys to Food Safety should be adopted when 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.

- Drink only boiled water from the mains or bottled drinks from reliable sources.
- Avoid drinks with ice of unknown origin.
- Purchase fresh food from hygienic and reliable sources. Do not patronise illegal hawkers.
- Clean and wash food thoroughly. Cook food, especially seafood (e.g. shellfish), pork and pig offal, thoroughly before consumption. Avoid raw food or undercooked food.
- Slice raw meat and offal into thin strips to allow thorough cooking, especially during hotpot or congee cooking.
- For sliced pig liver, depending on the thickness and quantity, boil at 100 degrees Celsius or stir-fry in hot skillet/wok for at least three to five minutes.
- Heating to an internal temperature of 90 degrees Celsius for 90 seconds is required for cooking of molluscan shellfish. If possible, remove the shells before cooking as they impede heat penetration. Otherwise, boil at 100 degrees Celsius until their shells open; boil for a further three to five minutes afterwards. Discard any shellfish that do not open during cooking.
- For meat and offal, make sure that juices are clear, not red, and blood is not visible when you cut the cooked meat and offal.
- When having hotpot, use separate chopsticks and utensils for handling raw and cooked foods to prevent cross-contamination.

In general, rodents (such as rats) can transmit multiple diseases to humans directly and indirectly. The public are advised to adopt the following measures:

- Eliminate sources of food and nesting places for rodents in the living environment. Store food in covered containers and handle pet food properly to avoid it becoming food for rodents;
- Store all refuse and food remnants in dustbins with well-fitted covers. Dustbins must be emptied at least once a day;
- Keep premises, especially refuse rooms and stairways, clean. Avoid accumulation of articles;
- Inspect all flowerbeds and pavements for rodent infestation regularly; and
- Avoid the high-risk activities below to reduce rodent contact:
  - Avoid rodent contact and places dirtied with rodent excreta;
  - Avoid handling rodents with bare hands;
  - Wash hands with liquid soap and water immediately after handling animals, and disinfect contaminated areas; and
  - If a wound appears, clean the broken skin immediately and cover it properly with waterproof adhesive dressings.

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## CFS follows up on illegal import of frozen liquid egg white from Japan

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (August 9) that 390 cartons (a total of 4 680 kilograms) of pasteurised frozen liquid egg white from Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan, were illegally imported into Hong Kong, breaching the relevant Food Safety Order. None of the product concerned has entered the market. The CFS is following up on the case.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS inspected a consignment of food imported from Japan and found that the above-mentioned product from Ibaraki Prefecture therein was not accompanied with a radiation certificate, breaching the relevant Food Safety Order. The product concerned has not entered the market and has been marked and sealed by the CFS. The CFS has taken a sample of the product concerned for testing of the radiation level, and no radiation has been detected.

According to the Order, the import of all chilled or frozen game, meat and poultry, all poultry eggs and all live, chilled or frozen aquatic products from five Japanese prefectures, namely Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma, to Hong Kong, must be accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent authority of Japan certifying that the radiation levels do not exceed the guideline levels."

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. An investigation is ongoing.

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## CSD holds passing-out parade

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) held a passing-out parade at the Staff Training Institute in Stanley today (August 9) to mark the graduation of 22 Officers and 72 Assistant Officers II. The Chairman of the Legislative Council Panel on Security, Mr Chan Hak-kan, reviewed the parade.

During the parade, the correctional officers marched past the reviewing officers with energy and high morale. They demonstrated the self-confidence, team spirit and enthusiasm of being correctional officers.

The newly recruited Officers and Assistant Officers II have undergone 26 weeks and 23 weeks of training respectively. One Officer was awarded the Principal's Shield, while three Assistant Officers II were awarded the Golden Whistle for their outstanding performance.

Two graduates spoke to the media after the parade. Officer Mr Lee Tsz-lok said he hopes to help persons in custody to rehabilitate through his teaching experience and communication skills.

Another interviewee, Assistant Officer II Ms Man Woon-yi, who was formerly a representative of the Hong Kong Athletic Team, said correctional work is not only a job, but also a commitment. She expressed the hope to assist persons in custody in turning over a new leaf so as to contribute to the community.

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## Employee fined for violation of safety legislation

A foreman was fined \$15,000 at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (August 9) for a violation of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance. The prosecution was launched by the Labour Department.

The case involved a fatal accident that occurred on December 9, 2017 at a public housing construction site in Shek Kip Mei. A metal bracket being lifted by a tower crane suddenly displaced and hit a worker assisting in the lifting operation. The worker sustained a serious head injury and passed away the same day.

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## HAD to open temporary night heat shelters

The Home Affairs Department will open 19 temporary night heat shelters tonight (August 9) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2835 1473.

The 19 night heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall  
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex  
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –

Causeway Bay Community Centre  
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Lei Tung Community Hall  
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai –

Wan Chai Activities Centre  
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –

Hung Hom Community Hall  
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices  
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre  
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –

Shek Kip Mei Community Hall  
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate  
Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –

Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre  
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –

Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre  
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –

Tung Chung Community Hall  
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,  
39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –  
Kwai Shing Community Hall  
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –  
Cheung Wah Community Hall  
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –  
Hang Hau Community Hall  
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,  
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –  
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre  
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –  
Tai Po Community Centre  
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –  
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall  
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –  
Butterfly Bay Community Centre  
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –  
Long Ping Community Hall  
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –  
Tin Yiu Community Centre  
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

The temporary night heat shelters will resume their functions as either community centres or community halls in the daytime for hire by the local community and cannot continue to be open as heat shelters. People may choose to take refuge from the heat during the daytime in the common areas in any of the 20 designated community centres or community halls. Their opening hours are from 9am to 10pm. For addresses of the community centres or community halls, please browse the following webpage:

[www.had.gov.hk/file\\_manager/en/documents/public\\_services/emergency\\_services/List\\_CH\\_CC\\_Day\\_E.pdf](http://www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf).