

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 22) 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 July 14 to 20, six community-acquired LD cases were reported:

1. A male patient, aged 69 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Pang Ching Court, Wong Tai Sin;
2. A male patient, aged 59 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Ming Shun Lau, Jat Min Chuen, Shatin;
3. A male patient, aged 93 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Tung Fung House, 68-74 Tak Ku Ling Road, Kowloon City;
4. A male patient, aged 68 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Shin Chi House, Shin Ming Estate, Tseung Kwan O;
5. A male patient, aged 85 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Sun Wai House, Sun Chui Estate, Shatin; and
6. A male patient, aged 54 with underlying illnesses, who was residing on the Mainland during the incubation period.

"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 20 this year, 59 LD cases have been reported. In 2018 and 2017, there were 105 and 72 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.

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.

Temporary suspension of Mobile Library 11 services

Mobile Library 11 will suspend services from today (July 22) to July 24 for urgent repair works, a spokesman for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today.

The affected service points are Lai Yiu Estate in Kwai Chung, Wan Tau Tong Estate and Tai Yuen Estate in Tai Po, and Kwong Yuen Estate in Sha Tin. For enquiries about Mobile Library 11 services, please call 2479 1055.

Readers are welcome to use other public libraries during the service suspension period. They may also renew library materials by telephoning 2698 0002 or 2827 2833, or via www.hkpl.gov.hk.

Lifesaving services suspended at Cafeteria Old Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 22) that due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty, the lifesaving services at Cafeteria Old Beach in Tuen Mun District are suspended until further notice.

First aid services will be maintained at the beach.

Oil spill sighted at some beaches

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department said today (July 22) that because of an oil spill, red flags have been hoisted at Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach, Lido Beach, Casam Beach, Approach Beach, Hoi Mei Wan Beach and Ting Kau Beach in Tsuen Wan District. The beaches have been closed until further notice. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Anglers' Beach temporarily closed

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 22) that Anglers' Beach in Tsuen Wan District is temporarily closed until further notice for maintenance of the shark prevention net. The red flag has been hoisted at the beach. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.