

Diets and physical activity of preschool students show improvements

The Department of Health (DH) today (September 18) announced that the results of the Survey on Healthy Lifestyle of Preschool Students 2016/17 were satisfactory, with findings showing that lower class students of full-day classes at kindergartens and child care centres had been served an average of 1.2 servings of fruit, two servings of vegetables and 3.1 glasses of water, as well as conducted an average of 120 minutes of physical activity per day.

The DH also announced the launch of the Healthy Drinks at School Charter, which aims to enhance the school culture conducive to healthy eating and reduce the sugar intake of preschool students.

The Survey was conducted between November 2016 and March 2017, during which 380 schools and 3,639 parents of lower class students were interviewed to assess the diets and physical activity of preschool students during and after school. Most of the interviewed kindergartens and child care centres provided a conducive environment to healthy eating and physical activity for preschool students. Over 60 per cent had formulated a healthy eating school policy while around 80 per cent had formulated a physical activity school policy.

The Assistant Director of Health (Health Promotion), Dr Anne Fung, at a press conference today said, "Compared to a similar survey conducted by the DH in 2013, kindergartens and child care centres provided fewer instant drinks (not including milk formula) and used food as rewards for preschool students less frequently. However, more than half of the interviewed kindergartens and child care centres still provided full-cream or sweetened dairy products for their students. Fifty-one per cent provided instant drinks (not including milk formula) (a drop of 16 per cent compared to the 2013 survey), with half of them adding full-cream or other sweetened dairy products (49 per cent) or sugar (24 per cent) to those drinks. Forty-five per cent of staff members had used food such as biscuits, cookies, sweets and chocolate as rewards (a drop of 19 per cent compared to the 2013 survey)."

To reduce the sugar intake of preschool students from drinks, the DH has launched the Healthy Drinks at School Charter to be implemented from the 2018/19 school year. Kindergartens and child care centres signing the Charter, which is valid for three school years, have committed to encouraging young children to drink water and to make healthy drinks available to them. They have also vowed not to provide drinks with added sugar or with a relatively high sugar content, and not to use food as a reward. So far more than 300 kindergartens and child care centres have signed the Charter.

Dr Fung pointed out that excessive intake of sugar not only increases the risk of overweight and obesity in children, but also their chance of suffering from tooth decay. Children having sugary drinks will even develop a

sweet tooth, which in turn hinders the development of a healthy eating habit. In addition, unhealthy foods with high sugar, high salt or high fat are usually used as rewards. She expressed the hope that the Charter can help create and enhance a school environment and culture conducive to healthy eating, as well as promote healthy drinks at school, thus urging more kindergartens and child care centres to sign the Charter.

The survey also found that parents' knowledge on healthy eating and physical activity for preschool students requires improvement. Less than half of the interviewed parents knew that children aged 4 to 6 years should consume at least two servings of fruit per day, while only 15 per cent knew that children aged 2 to 6 years should perform at least 180 minutes of physical activity each day. On the other hand, 79 per cent parents knew about restriction of screen time for preschool students (an increase of 17 per cent compared to the 2013 survey), and the median duration of preschool students' screen-time activity had been reduced from 80 minutes to 60 minutes.

Dr Fung noted that 94 per cent of preschool students had not consumed enough fruit and vegetables and over 70 per cent had less than 180 minutes of physical activity per day, while over 40 per cent of parents had used food as rewards. She advised parents to pay attention to their children's daily intake of fruit and vegetables and whether they have performed sufficient physical activity. Parents should use rewards such as verbal encouragement or applause, or give extra parent-child activity time or offer small school supplies to their children instead of food, to ensure their healthy development.

She added, "Compared to students in full-day classes, those in half-day classes were served less fruit and vegetables in kindergartens and child care centres and performed less physical activity per day. Parents of students in half-day classes should pay special attention since the diets and physical activity of these students are mainly arranged by their family."

To combat the threat of non-communicable diseases, the Government this year announced "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong", setting out nine local targets to be achieved by 2025, which include halting the rise in prevalence of raised blood pressure, diabetes and obesity as well as attaining a 30 per cent relative reduction in mean population daily intake of salt/sodium. The DH will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to promote the adoption of healthy eating habits by the public to achieve the targets.

The survey results also revealed that the kindergartens and child care centres which had joined the StartSmart@school.hk Campaign (SSS Campaign) of the DH performed better in promoting healthy diet and physical activity at school than those that had not joined the campaign. Over 60 per cent of parents agreed that the SSS Campaign had enhanced their knowledge and concern on healthy eating and physical activity, and was effective in enhancing healthy eating and physical activity among their children.

Dr Fung said that the DH will continue to empower schools, school staff

and parents in promoting healthy eating and physical activity by strengthening co-operation with kindergartens, child care centres and school sponsoring bodies through the SSS Campaign. A series of education materials such as videos and posters will also be produced.

The Controller of the Centre of Health Protection of the DH, Dr Wong Ka-hing, presented certificates of appreciation to representatives of 10 task force members of the SSS Campaign for their support and contribution to the Healthy Drinks at School Charter.

The territory-wide SSS Campaign was launched by the DH, the Education Bureau and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2012, and is targeted at children aged 2 to 6 years. Using effective health education resources and training targeting kindergartens and child care centres, it aims to encourage and support parents and caregivers to create conducive environments to healthy eating and physical activity for preschool students in the school and at home, and to help preschool students cultivate a sustainable healthy lifestyle.

The public is welcome to visit the StartSmart@school.hk Campaign website (www.startsmart.gov.hk) to learn more about the Healthy Drinks at School Charter and health tips for preschool students.

Total number of reported drug abusers in decline but drug abuse among young adults and hidden drug abuse still require attention

The Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) reviewed the local drug situation in the first half of 2018 at its quarterly meeting today (September 18). The overall number of reported drug abusers declined compared to the same period last year, while drug abuse among young adults and hidden drug abuse still call for attention.

According to the latest figures of the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA), the total number of reported drug abusers in the first half of 2018 decreased by 4 per cent (from 4 166 to 4 018) compared with the same period last year. The number of reported drug abusers aged under 21 registered a decrease of 7 per cent (from 275 to 255).

The number of newly reported drug abusers decreased by 3 per cent (from 836 to 815) compared with the same period last year. About half (48 per cent) were young adults aged between 21 and 35, showing that drug abuse in this age

group still requires attention.

The latest CRDA figures also revealed that the median history of drug abuse of newly reported abusers (i.e. the time for abusers to be reported to the CRDA by reporting agencies from their first drug abuse) was five years in the first half of 2018, compared with 4.3 years in 2017, indicating that hidden drug abuse remains a concern.

In the first half of 2018, the total number of reported narcotic analgesic abusers increased by 3 per cent (from 2 305 to 2 379). The vast majority were heroin abusers, the number of which increased by 3 per cent (from 2 304 to 2 378). The total number of reported psychotropic substance abusers (PSAs) decreased by 11 per cent (from 2 369 to 2 111) compared to the same period last year. Among the newly reported cases, the number of PSAs (at 715) was considerably higher than that of narcotic analgesic abusers (at 101).

Heroin remained the most common type of drug abused among all reported drug abusers. Meanwhile, methamphetamine (commonly known as "Ice") continued to be the most common type of psychotropic substance abused, with the number of reported abusers having decreased by 25 per cent (from 1 036 to 776) compared to the same period last year. There were increases in the numbers of reported cocaine abusers (from 474 to 516) and cannabis abusers (from 194 to 220). Increased cocaine and cannabis abuse among reported young drug abusers aged under 21 was also observed (the number of cocaine abusers increased from 122 to 146; the number of cannabis abusers increased from 68 to 75).

The numbers of abusers of other major types of psychotropic substances also saw reductions, including triazolam/midazolam/zopiclone (from 510 to 509), ketamine (from 418 to 260), cough medicine (from 148 to 133), MDMA ("ecstasy") (from 16 to 15) and nimetazepam (from 17 to 13).

The ACAN Chairman, Dr Ben Cheung, said, "There are still challenges in our anti-drug work. Although the overall number of reported drug abusers in the first half of 2018 declined, the hidden drug abuse problem persisted. The proportion of drug-abusing young adults remained high, and the numbers of young cocaine abusers and cannabis abusers also increased. Therefore, we will continue to strengthen preventive education and publicity, especially those for youngsters, and explore more means to reach out to hidden drug abusers in co-ordination with the anti-drug sector. Anti-drug information and help are available through the Narcotics Division (ND)'s anti-drug hotline 186 186 and instant messaging service 98 186 186."

The Commissioner for Narcotics, Ms Manda Chan, said, "At the start of the new school year, the ND and ACAN will continue to disseminate anti-drug messages to youngsters through different channels and platforms, including popular websites and mobile applications. Youngsters are encouraged to pursue healthy lifestyles, understand the harms of drug abuse and stay away from drugs."

The CRDA figures for the first half of 2018 are available on the [ND's website](#).

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for June – August 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for June – August 2018) released today (September 18) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in June – August 2018, same as that in May – July 2018. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.1% in the two periods.

Comparing June – August 2018 with May – July 2018, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate in different industry sectors varied, but were generally small in magnitude.

Total employment increased by around 9 700 from 3 872 700 in May – July 2018 to 3 882 400 in June – August 2018. Over the same period, the labour force also increased by around 12 400 from 3 987 400 to 3 999 800.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 2 700 from 114 700 in May – July 2018 to 117 400 in June – August 2018. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 1 400 from 44 100 to 45 500.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "Labour market remained tight in June – August 2018, with the unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate staying unchanged at 2.8% and 1.1% respectively. Total employment registered a further solid growth on a year-on-year basis."

"Changes in sectoral unemployment rates were generally small when compared to the preceding three-month period. On a year-on-year comparison to net out seasonal fluctuations, most major service sectors showed improvement in the unemployment situation. In particular, unemployment rates in the information and communications, accommodation services, as well as retail sectors recorded visible declines."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "While labour market conditions will likely remain favourable in the near term, the Government will stay vigilant as to how developments in the external environment will affect the local labour market going forward."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) is committed to providing comprehensive and free employment services through its job centres, industry-based recruitment centres and on-line platforms, with a view to providing appropriate support services which meet the needs of the job-seekers. The LD

has also implemented special employment programmes for job-seekers who have special needs or difficulties in employment (such as the youth, mature persons and persons with disabilities) to enhance their employability and facilitate their employment.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will organise the Job Fair for Middle-aged and Elderly Employment on September 20 and 21 at the Tuen Mun Town Hall, with 44 participating employers offering around 5 200 vacancies from various industries. The LD will also organise the New Opportunities – New Terrain Job Expo on October 25 and 26 at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Besides, industry-based or district-based job fairs are regularly organised at the LD's industry-based recruitment centres and job centres located across the territory.

Further Information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

The survey for June – August 2018 covered a sample of some 25 000 households or 74 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the publication contains statistics for the quarter April – June 2018 while the next issue covering the quarter July – September 2018 will be available by end November 2018. Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=B1050001).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the Household Statistics Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).

Census and Statistics Department

announces schedule for issuing regular release of statistical data in 2019

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) announced today (September 18) the schedule for issuing regular release of statistical data in 2019 at Annex (PDF format). The schedule, which covers 118 items, has been uploaded on the C&SD's website (www.censtatd.gov.hk/press_release/index.jsp) to facilitate access by the public.

The information sheet entitled "Census and Statistics Department – 2019 Regular Statistics Release Schedule" has also been released via the C&SD's website. Presenting the date schedule by data category, this information sheet serves as a handy reference on the issue dates of the regular press releases of individual subject areas in 2019.

"We have been making continuous efforts to shorten the time lag in releasing statistics. At present, we are able to release most monthly statistics within one month and all quarterly statistics within three months after the reference period," a spokesman for the C&SD said.

"Starting from the reference period of the first quarter of 2019, the C&SD will advance the first release of the quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (the advance estimates) to around one month after the reference period. The advance estimates will include the real growth of overall GDP and its major expenditure components to facilitate an early assessment of the latest economic performance and sources of growth of Hong Kong. The C&SD will issue press releases to announce these advance estimates. When more data become available, the C&SD will then compile the revised figures on GDP. The revised figures (with more detailed components) as well as the current price GDP and GDP deflator will be released in the C&SD website and the "Gross Domestic Product (Quarterly) Report" about two weeks later. No separate press release on the revised GDP figures will be issued by the C&SD."

The press releases listed on the schedule will be issued via the Information Services Department at 4.30pm on the release day. They will also be posted on the C&SD's website (www.censtatd.gov.hk/press_release/index.jsp) shortly afterwards.

"We have all along adhered to the pre-announced schedule for issuing these regular press releases. Only under exceptional circumstances such as those arising from unexpected adverse weather conditions would the releases be postponed. In such events, an announcement will be made via the Information Services Department regarding the special circumstances and the revised date for issuing the press release concerned," the spokesman added.

In addition to these regular press releases, other press releases on statistical data (e.g. press releases announcing results of ad hoc surveys) are also issued by the C&SD from time to time.

All press releases issued by the C&SD in recent years are posted on its website for reference by the general public.

Enquiries on the schedule can be directed to the C&SD at telephone number 2582 4958.

Special traffic and transport arrangements in Chai Wan for Chung Yeung Festival

The Transport Department (TD) today (September 18) reminded the public that in view of the large number of grave sweepers travelling to the cemeteries in Chai Wan during the Chung Yeung Festival, special traffic and transport arrangements will be implemented to ensure members of the public can visit the cemeteries in a safe and orderly manner.

The special traffic and transport arrangements will include:

A) Road closures

October 6 (Saturday), 13 (Saturday), 20 (Saturday) and 27 (Saturday), and November 3 (Saturday), 4 (Sunday) and 11 (Sunday)

In connection with the implementation of Phase I road closures by the Police, vehicles will be allowed to use the section of Cape Collinson Road east of Lin Shing Road (i.e., the left-turning movement from Lin Shing Road to Cape Collinson Road leading to the vicinity of the Chinese Permanent Cemetery) from 7am to 6pm daily. Should traffic conditions worsen, the Police may consider escalating to Phase II road closures.

October 7 (Sunday), 14 (Sunday), 21 (Sunday) and 28 (Sunday)

In connection with the implementation of Phase II road closures by the Police, the left-turning movement from Lin Shing Road to Cape Collinson Road leading to the vicinity of the Chinese Permanent Cemetery will be closed to all vehicular traffic (except for green minibus (GMB) route 18M, hearses, funeral vehicles and vehicles with permits) from 7am to 6.30pm daily.

Lin Shing Road and Cape Collinson Road will be closed to all vehicular traffic from 7am to 6.30pm daily (except for franchised buses, GMB routes 16A, 16M, 16X and 18M, hearses, funeral vehicles and vehicles with permits). The Police may allow taxis and public light buses to enter Lin Shing Road and turn right into Cape Collinson Road depending on the traffic conditions in

the vicinity of the Chai Wan cemeteries.

October 17 (Chung Yeung Festival)

In connection with the implementation of Phase III road closures by the Police, Lin Shing Road and Cape Collinson Road will be closed to all vehicular traffic from 7am to 7pm daily (except for franchised buses, GMB routes 16A, 16M and 16X, hearses, funeral vehicles and vehicles with permits).

B) Public transport services

New World First Bus (NWFB) route 388 (Circular) between Chai Wan Station Bus Terminus and Chai Wan Cemeteries will be operated from 8am to 5pm on October 7, 14, 21 and 28, from 9am to 4pm daily on October 13, 20 and 27, from 7am to 6pm on October 17, from 9am to 2pm on November 4, and when necessary the service will be strengthened depending on the traffic conditions and passenger demand.

NWFB route 389 (Circular) between Shau Kei Wan Bus Terminus and Chai Wan Cemeteries will be operated from 9am to 5pm daily on October 7, 14, 21 and 28, from 9am to 4pm daily on October 20, from 7am to 6pm on October 17, and when necessary the service will be strengthened depending on the traffic conditions and passenger demand.

NWFB route 9C from Shau Kei Wan Bus Terminus to Chai Wan Cemeteries will be operated from 9am to 1pm on October 17, and when necessary the service will be strengthened depending on the traffic conditions and passenger demand.

Actual implementation of and adjustments to road closures, traffic control and public transport diversions will be made by the Police at the time depending on conditions in the areas.

Members of the public are advised to follow the latest traffic news on television and radio. They may also visit the TD's website (www.td.gov.hk) or call 1823 for the latest traffic and transport information.