

HA releases risk management publication

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (March 7) published the Annual Report on Sentinel and Serious Untoward Events, which lists sentinel events and serious untoward events in public hospitals over the past year. The report aims to continuously enhance risk management awareness among healthcare professionals in public hospitals.

The Annual Report on Sentinel and Serious Untoward Events covers the period from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. There were a total of 29 sentinel events and 80 serious untoward events reported by public hospitals during the period. Among the serious untoward events, there were 74 and six events related to medication errors and patient misidentifications respectively. The Report has been endorsed by the HA Board.

The Annual Report on Sentinel and Serious Untoward Events published today has been distributed to healthcare workers in public hospitals and is accessible to the public at www.ha.org.hk/report/sentinel_event.

Hong Kong's latest foreign currency reserve assets figures released

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (March 7) that the official foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong amounted to US\$416.4 billion as at the end of February 2025 (end-January 2025: US\$421.5 billion) (Annex).

Including unsettled foreign exchange contracts, the foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong at the end of February 2025 amounted to US\$415.9 billion (end-January 2025: US\$421.5 billion).

The total foreign currency reserve assets of US\$416.4 billion represent over five times the currency in circulation or about 38 per cent of Hong Kong dollar M3.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are

issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of March 2025, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

March 7	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
March 14	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
March 31	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
March 31	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

[Update on dengue fever](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 7) reported the latest number of dengue fever (DF) cases, and urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From February 28 to yesterday (March 6), the CHP recorded one imported DF case. The patient had travelled to Indonesia during the incubation period.

As of yesterday, seven imported DF cases were recorded this year. A total of 161 cases of DF were recorded in 2024, including 156 imported and five local cases. In 2023, 62 imported cases of DF were recorded.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the global incidence of DF has markedly increased over the past two decades, posing a substantial public health challenge. In 2023, ongoing transmissions, combined with an unexpected spike in DF cases, resulted in over 6.5 million cases and more than 7 300 dengue-related deaths reported in over 80 countries/territories. In 2024, the WHO recorded over 14 million cases, which was a record number of cases.

Detailed information on the latest DF situation in Hong Kong, as well as neighbouring and overseas countries and areas, has been uploaded to the CHP [website](#).

Members of the public returning from areas affected by DF should apply insect repellent for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to a doctor.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers, and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

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â€‹DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Reapply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF page of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).

CFS announces results of risk assessment study on iodine in food

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (March 7) announced the results of a risk assessment study on iodine in food, which showed that iodine is present in many locally available foods. Members of the public should maintain a healthy and balanced diet by incorporating iodine-rich food, including seaweeds such as kelp; seafood such as fish and prawns; eggs; dairy; and their products, to meet the World Health Organization (WHO)'s daily iodine intake recommendation.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The objective of this study is to examine the iodine levels in iodine-rich foods available in the local market. Its results supplement the information on iodine content in locally available foods in the Dietary Iodine Intake in Hong Kong Adults, a risk assessment study report published by the CFS in 2011."

A total of 296 prepackaged and non-prepackaged food samples were collected in late 2023 at the retail level for the determination of iodine contents. The study covered 10 food groups, including five known to be high in iodine from the risk assessment study in 2011 and literature, namely plain seaweed; fish and its products; aquatic animals (other than fish) and their products; eggs; and dairy and its products. The other five food groups were foods containing high-iodine ingredients: soup noodles with seaweed (soup excluded); kimbap; soup with seaweed; snacks with seaweed; and miscellaneous.

According to the study results, the iodine contents of the food samples ranged from not detected (i.e. <0.2 micrograms per 100 grams) to 220 000µg/100g. Based on the mean values, almost all food items from the food group of plain seaweed contain iodine more than 600µg/100g, the highest among all food groups. It is followed by the food group of aquatic animals (other than fish) and their products, with nearly half of its food items containing iodine above 200µg/100g. The five food items with the highest iodine contents per 100g are dried kelp (180 000µg); dried seaweed (including seaweed wrapper) (4 000µg); dried crab snack (1 700µg); seasoned seaweed snacks (1 600µg); and seaweed flakes/powder toppings (980µg).

The spokesman said that iodine is an essential micronutrient required for normal thyroid function, growth and development. Both iodine deficiency and excess can adversely affect the thyroid gland and, consequently, overall health. According to the WHO, the recommended daily iodine intake is 120µg for children aged 6 to 12, 150µg for adolescents and adults, and 250µg for pregnant or lactating women.

In Hong Kong, the Iodine Survey and the Population Health Survey 2020-22 by the Department of Health revealed that iodine status was adequate in school-aged children aged 6 to 12, younger people aged 15 to 34, women of childbearing age aged 15 to 44, and pregnant and lactating women who were taking iodine-containing supplements. However, pregnant and lactating women

who were not taking iodine-containing supplements and the general population aged 15 to 84 overall had insufficient iodine intake and mild iodine deficiency.

"Iodine deficiency disorders (IDDs) can cause damage to the developing brain, goitre (an enlarged thyroid gland), and hypothyroidism. Pregnant and lactating women, infants, and young children are particularly vulnerable to IDDs," the spokesman added, urging the public to maintain a healthy and balanced diet. To meet the WHO's daily iodine intake recommendation, adults are advised to consume foods that are rich in iodine, including seaweeds such as kelp; seafood such as fish and prawns; eggs; dairy; and their products, like ready-to-eat seaweed, boiled quail eggs, and dried seafood snacks; as well as foods using seaweeds as ingredients, such as noodle dishes, rice dishes, soup dishes and baked goods. In addition, consumers can use iodised salt instead of ordinary table salt, keeping total salt intake below 5g (one teaspoon) per day.

Moreover, the CFS reminded persons with existing medical conditions or thyroid problems to consult healthcare professionals concerning the intake of iodine.

Details and results of the study are available on the CFS website.

[Education Bureau organises Mental Health Fun Day](#)

The Education Bureau (EDB) organised a Mental Health Fun Day at Ocean Park Hong Kong today (March 7) to promote mental health awareness among students. The event had the participation of and received support from the Department of Health, the Advisory Committee on Mental Health (ACMH) and the "Shall We Talk" Initiative.

The Fun Day enabled students to understand the lives and characteristics of different animals through participating in exploratory activities organised by Ocean Park Hong Kong to experience the four key elements of the 4Rs Mental Health Charter (4Rs Charter) – Rest, Relaxation, Relationship, and Resilience.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, said that the purpose of implementing the 4Rs Charter is to help students develop healthy habits, foster a healthy culture in schools and comprehensively enhance the mental health of students, school staff and parents. Currently, more than 650 schools have joined the 4Rs Charter, demonstrating the support and commitment of the school sector in nurturing students' physical and psychological well-being.

She said that the EDB will continue to optimise the school curriculum and implement various student growth programmes, helping students develop positive values and enhance resilience. Meanwhile, the EDB will provide schools with more resources and professional support as well as arrange non-governmental organisations to conduct various mental health activities at schools with a view to strengthening the promotion of students' mental health in schools.

At the opening ceremony, Dr Choi; the Chairman of the ACMH, Dr Lam Ching-choi; the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam; and the Chief Executive of the Ocean Park Corporation, Mr Ivan Wong, together with the mascots of Ocean Park Hong Kong, Whiskers and Bao Bao, and other guests, relaxed their body and mind and relieved stress through stretching exercises. In addition, among the other guests in attendance at the opening ceremony were representatives of school councils and school heads' associations of primary and secondary schools, the principals from schools participating in the 4Rs Charter, as well as partner organisations of the 4Rs Charter, joining hands to enhance students' physical and psychological well-being.

The Fun Day featured eight checkpoints where students could learn tips about sleep and rest. Through learning about animals' characteristics, they could also experience how to relax and release emotions through their five senses. Students worked in groups to complete different problem-solving tasks, fostering teamwork among peers, understanding the importance of building emotional connections with those around them as well as experiencing the benefits of positive attitudes and applying strategies, thereby developing their resilience.

The EDB appeals to all schools in the territory to join the 4Rs Charter, instil a sense of well-being in students' everyday lives, and work together for their healthy development. The EDB will continue to strengthen the synergy through cross-departmental and cross-sector collaboration to help schools utilise external and community resources for promoting students' mental health.

Details of the 4Rs Mental Health Charter are set out in the EDB Circular Memorandum No. 60/2024 (applications.edb.gov.hk/circular/upload/EDBCM/EDBCM24060E.pdf) and the 4Rs Mental Health Charter designated webpage (mentalhealth.edb.gov.hk/tc/promotion-at-the-universal-level/promotional-resources-for-schools/121.html).