

CHP investigates suspected food poisoning case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 15) investigating a suspected food poisoning case involving a person who had eaten porcini mushrooms.

The case involves a male patient aged 76, who presented with diarrhoea, vomiting and dizziness around four hours after having lunch with packaged porcini mushrooms without trademark purchased in Yunnan, Mainland earlier and cooked at home on April 6. He sought medical attention at the Accident and Emergency Department of Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, and was admitted on the same day. He was in stable condition, and was discharged after treatment.

The CHP's investigation revealed that the uncooked mushroom samples found in the patient's home contained not only edible species, but also mixed with, over a half, inedible/poisonous species containing gastrointestinal irritant that lasts even after cooked, which may cause discomfort to consumers.

According to the patient, he had participated a tour group to Yunnan, Mainland from December 21, 2023 to January 2, 2024 organised by a local travel agency, during which he bought two packages of the concerned porcini mushrooms from a shop near Sifang Street, Lijiang. The CHP has notified the case to the relevant authority of the Mainland, and will continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action to safeguard public health.

A CHP spokesman appealed to members of the public who have purchased porcini mushrooms at the above time and place should avoid consuming the relevant product. If mushroom poisoning is suspected, the patient should seek immediate medical attention and bring along any available remnant for identification.

"Mushroom poisoning is generally acute. Common presentations include gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain appearing shortly after ingestion. Depending on the mushroom species, patients may also have other symptoms like profuse sweating, hallucinations, comas or other neurological symptoms, as well as liver failure. Death may result in severe cases," the spokesman said.

Also, the CHP recommended members of the public to take note of the following when choosing or consuming mushrooms locally or overseas:

- Do not buy mushroom products which are doubted to have carried mixing of unknown species;
- Buy mushrooms from reputable and reliable suppliers and not to buy mushroom products which may be mixed with unknown species. Do not pick

wild mushrooms for consumption as it is difficult to distinguish edible mushroom species from inedible ones.

- Do not buy mushrooms which look unhygienic (with growing substrates left with the product) or show signs of spoilage (with coloured spots/abnormal smell/slime, etc); and
- Wash and cook mushrooms thoroughly before consumption.