

CHP investigates suspected food poisoning case related to calcium oxalate raphide

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 4) investigating a case of suspected food poisoning, and hence reminded the public to beware of vegetables containing calcium oxalate raphide.

The case involved a female patient aged 42, who developed sore throat with swelling sensation, abdominal pain, nausea and diarrhoea shortly after consuming watercress at home on July 31. The patient consulted a private doctor on August 1 and had recovered.

Initial investigations revealed that the watercress the patient had consumed was purchased from an online shop. The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

Plants containing calcium oxalate raphide (a needle-shaped crystal of the chemical) can injure the skin and mucous membranes and cause irritation, such as numbness and burning sensation of the tongue, mouth and lips, and swelling of the tongue and lips. Consumption of vegetables accidentally mixed with calcium oxalate raphide-containing plants may also cause food poisoning.

Members of the public should:

- Not pick and consume wild plants;
- Purchase vegetables from reliable suppliers; and
- Remove any plants mixed with edible vegetables and wash them thoroughly before cooking and consumption.

The public may visit the pages on [Food Poisoning Related to the Giant Alocasia](#) and [Calcium Oxalate Food Poisoning](#) of the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for more information and health advice.