

CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (September 14) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"Infants and children, the elderly, pregnant women, those with chronic illnesses such as heart disease or high blood pressure, outdoor/manual workers, and individuals who are overweight are more vulnerable to heat stroke. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or the late afternoon, if possible;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation;
- Do not stay inside a parked vehicle; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day if feasible. If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

â€‹The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index is high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes;

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15, preferably higher. Reapply every two hours if you stay out in the sun, and after swimming, sweating or towelling off; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

â€œIf symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

â€œThe public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather report and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.

Very Hot Weather Warning issued

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning.

To prevent heat stroke, avoid prolonged activities outdoors.

If engaged in outdoor work or activities, wear a wide-brimmed hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes. Stay in shaded areas as much as possible.

Drink plenty of water, and avoid beverages containing caffeine or alcohol.

If you feel sick, consult a doctor right away.

Regional flag day today

Three charities have been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today (September 14). They are, on Hong Kong Island, Barnabas Charitable Service Association Limited; in Kowloon, the Hong Kong Christian Kun Sun Association Limited; and in the New Territories, the International Nature Loving Association Limited, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Arrangements have been made with the charities to help people to distinguish among the three flag-selling activities.

Information on the three flag-selling organisations on September 14 is as follows:

Region	Name of organisation	Colour of collection bag	Colour of flag
Hong Kong Island	Barnabas Charitable Service Association Limited	Blue	White
Kowloon	The Hong Kong Christian Kun Sun Association Limited	Blue	Light yellow
New Territories	The International Nature Loving Association Limited	Green	White

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities, including any updated information, covered by the issued Public Subscription Permits have been published on the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search). Permits for flag days containing information on contact methods of the flag-selling organisations and the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/ngo/controlofc/flagdays) for reference. For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255, or the designated hotline of the 1823 Call Centre at 3142 2678.

In the case of suspected fraudulent flag day activities, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.

HKETO, Brussels promotes Hong Kong film industry and business opportunities in southern Italy (with photos)

With support from the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Brussels (HKETO, Brussels) and the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency, Hong Kong movies are in the spotlight at the Salento International Film Festival (SIFF) taking place in Tricase in the Salento peninsula of southern Italy from September 10 to 15 (Tricase time).

SIFF is a major international film festival in southern Italy. For years, it has featured many Hong Kong and Asian productions. In this current edition, the Hong Kong films screened by SIFF included the works of emerging filmmakers, "Dust to Dust" by Jonathan Li (2023) and "In Broad Daylight" by Lawrence Kan (2024), as well as retrospectives from well-established director, "As Tears Go By" by Wong Kar-wai (1988).

Speaking before the screening of the investigative drama "In Broad Daylight" during the Hong Kong Film Night on the evening of September 12, Deputy Representative of HKETO, Brussels Miss Fiona Li highlighted that Hong Kong is a creative hub with a long history in cinematography. "We also see an increasing number of emerging actors and young filmmakers whose productions cover a diversity of genres", she said.

To further elevate Hong Kong cinema to the global stage and display the talents of Hong Kong filmmakers globally, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has invested significant budgets in fostering the film and creative industries. Miss Li added, "One of the recent measures is the launch of Hong Kong-Europe-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme under the Film Development Fund. It provides funding support to eligible film projects co-produced by filmmakers from European and Asian countries to make films featuring Hong Kong, European and Asian cultures."

Seizing the opportunity to gain more exposure in southern Italy, HKETO, Brussels held a business event in the margin of the SIFF on September 12, jointly with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Invest Hong Kong, to reach out to local entrepreneurs. Miss Li spoke during the event to promote Hong Kong's strong fundamentals and unique advantages to act as the gateway for Italian companies to enter the Mainland and Asian markets.



CHP appeals for heightened vigilance against invasive Group B Streptococcus

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (September 13) appealed to members of the public for heightened vigilance against invasive Group B Streptococcus and in particular, urged them to pay attention when touching or handling raw freshwater fish and should wear gloves, as well as not to consume undercooked freshwater fish.

Hong Kong has recorded in 2021 summer (between September and October) a cluster of more than 50 cases of Group B Streptococcus, belonged to serotype III sequence type 283 (ST283). The then investigation found that the infections were associated with contact of raw freshwater fish or consumption of undercooked freshwater fish. The CHP subsequently enhanced surveillance on the relevant cases with the Hospital Authority (HA). The recent surveillance data revealed an upward trend in the number of in-patients tested positive for invasive Group B Streptococcus during last month and September 11. The CHP immediately conducted further laboratory analysis of the cases in collaboration with the HA and the preliminary result showed that 27 of the cases were ST283. The CHP's analysis of some of the samples is still in progress and it cannot rule out that the number of cases will further increase.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations showed that the 27 patients with ST283 infections involved ten males and 17 females, aged between 53 and 88 (median: 70), residing in 18 districts throughout the territory, with no district clustering identified. Among them, 20 patients have underlying illness. The patients mainly presented with sepsis (15 patients), joint abscess (nine patients), meningitis (two patients) and urinary tract infection (one patient). The HA's information showed that among the 27 patients, five have been discharged, 17 hospitalised patients are in stable condition, three in serious condition and the other two passed away. The CHP is obtaining further information on the cause of death from HA.

The CHP also conducted an in-depth investigation on the exposure history of individual patients prior to the onset of the disease in order to identify the possible sources of infection. It was found that about 90 per cent of the patients had contact with or handled raw freshwater fish, prior to the onset of their disease. Seven of them reported that they had wounds on their hands when handling raw freshwater fish, but no infected person reported that they had consumed freshwater fish sashimi. Based on the above information, the CHP considered that the cause of infection was related to the handling of or contact with raw freshwater fish (especially with wound on the hands).

In addition, investigations revealed that 19 patients had been to freshwater fish stalls in markets and contacted freshwater fish, which involved 14 markets located in different districts. The personnel of the CHP had inspected markets where some of the patients had visited and wholesale fish markets supplying live fish to conduct epidemiological investigations. A total of 71 relevant workers have been monitored and no symptomatic worker found. The CHP has provided health education to the workers and will continue to monitor health conditions of workers of other fish stalls. During the investigations, it was identified that the ST283 isolates of environmental and fish samples collected from a retail freshwater fish stall inside the Shek Wu Hui Market is identical to those found in some patients. For prudence's sake, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has arranged thorough cleansing and disinfection for all freshwater fish stalls inside Shek Wu Hui Market. The investigations of the CHP are ongoing.

The CHP, the FEHD and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) held a joint meeting today to review the relevant situation. The FEHD's personnel will inspect all fish stalls, licensed Fresh Provision Shops and Permitted Premises selling freshwater fish in Hong Kong, provide education on hygiene to relevant workers and request them to strengthen cleaning and disinfection work at the premises. The FEHD conducts thorough cleaning at each public market every day and will pay special attention to the hygiene condition in the vicinity of freshwater fish stalls in the markets. Separately, the AFCD confirmed no abnormality has been observed regarding freshwater fish in wholesale fish markets and will continue to monitor the condition of live fish.

"Literature reported that ST283 exists in freshwater fish, especially in Southeast Asia countries, and with seasonal pattern. Association between invasive Group B Streptococcal infection of ST283 and consumption of raw freshwater fish was also reported in overseas literature," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Members of the public shall wear gloves when touching or handling raw freshwater fish. If symptoms such as inflamed wound and fever develop, they should seek medical attention promptly. Meanwhile, the public should refrain from consuming undercooked freshwater fish," a spokesman for the CHP reminded.

The CHP will issue a letter to doctors to enhance their alertness for Group B Streptococcus infection cases. The CHP will continue to provide

advice to members of the public through different channels to minimise the infection risk and work together with relevant departments to enhance publicity, especially health education related to wound care and consumption of freshwater fish.

A spokesman for the FEHD said that in order to protect public health, freshwater fish sashimi is a prohibited food item under the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) in Hong Kong.

To prevent Group B Streptococcus (ST283) infection, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene and should keep their hands clean and practice good wound care at all times, especially:

- To minimise the infection risks, workers of aquatic products or restaurants must wear gloves when handling aquatic products and avoid direct contact with aquatic products or dirty water with bare hands;
- When buying aquatic products, the public must avoid direct contact with the aquatic products or use any towel provided by the stalls. They should wash hands with liquid soap and water as soon as possible if having contact with aquatic products which are not fully cooked. When handling aquatic products at home, the public should also wear gloves and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Members of the public must not eat any freshwater fish sashimi, raw or undercooked freshwater aquatic products. When consuming hot pot food or congee items which consist of aquatic products, they should ensure that the food is thoroughly cooked in which the centre of the food should reach a temperature of at least 75 degrees Celsius so as to destroy pathogen; and
- People must not touch aquatic products directly whenever there is a wound on hands. If a wound is sustained during handling aquatic products, the wound must be cleaned immediately and properly covered with waterproof adhesive dressings. Individuals should seek medical advice promptly when wound infection is found.

The public may visit the CHP's [Invasive Group B Streptococcus Infection associated with Sequence Type 283 \(ST283\)](#) page for more information.