

## Woman arrested for suspected illegal sale of topical whitening product with undeclared drug ingredient (with photo)

â€‹The Department of Health (DH) today (September 3) conducted an operation against the sale of a topical whitening cream, namely 88 Total White Underarm Cream, which was found to contain an undeclared controlled ingredient. During the operation, a 37-year-old woman was arrested by the Police for suspected illegal sale of unregistered pharmaceutical product and Part 1 poison.

During the DH's market surveillance, a sample of the above product was purchased via an online platform for analysis. Test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the sample contained betamethasone valerate, which is a Part 1 poison under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138). The product is also suspected to be an unregistered pharmaceutical product. The DH's investigation is ongoing.

Betamethasone valerate is a steroid substance for treating inflammation. Inappropriate application of steroids could cause skin problems and systemic side effects such as moon face, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, skin atrophy, adrenal insufficiency and osteoporosis. Products containing betamethasone valerate are prescription medicines that should be used under a doctor's directions and supplied in a pharmacy under the supervision of a registered pharmacist upon a doctor's prescription.

According to the Ordinance, all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be sold in the market. Illegal sale or possession of unregistered pharmaceutical products or Part 1 poisons is a criminal offence. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The DH spokesman strongly urged members of the public not to buy or use products of doubtful composition or from unknown sources. All registered pharmaceutical products should carry a Hong Kong registration number on the package in the format of "HK-XXXXX". The safety, quality and efficacy of unregistered pharmaceutical products are not guaranteed.

People who have purchased the product concerned should stop using it immediately and consult healthcare professionals if in doubt or feeling unwell after use. They may submit the product to the Drug Office of the DH at Room 1804-06, 18/F, Wing On Kowloon Centre, 345 Nathan Road, Kowloon, during office hours for disposal.



---

## Marine Department announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

As the Standby Signal No.1 has been issued, the Marine Department reminds vessel owners, masters and persons-in-charge of vessels that they should take precautionary measures immediately and properly secure their vessels at safe locations.

In case of an accident, a report should be made immediately to the Vessel Traffic Centre at 2233 7801.

---

## Hong Kong Customs detects suspected frozen Wagyu beef smuggling case involving speedboat (with photos)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs yesterday (September 2) mounted an anti-smuggling operation in the south-western waters of Hong Kong and detected a suspected smuggling case involving a speedboat. About 10.1 tonnes of suspected smuggled frozen Wagyu beef and a high-powered speedboat equipped with six outboard engines, with a total estimated market value of about \$21 million, were seized.

Last night, Customs officers conducted an anti-smuggling operation in

waters west of Lamma Island and spotted a suspicious speedboat heading towards Mainland waters at a high speed, with its navigation light off. Officers immediately took action to pursue and intercept the speedboat, but the speedboat accelerated and fled.

Later, Customs stopped the speedboat in waters off the south of Lamma Island and boarded the vessel for investigation. The speedboat was discovered to be equipped with six powerful outboard engines and the batch of suspected smuggled frozen Wagyu beef was seized onboard the vessel. Five men, aged between 22 and 36, were also arrested.

An investigation is ongoing.

Customs stresses that it will keep up its enforcement action and will continue to vigorously combat sea smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, and carry out anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to crack down on such activities.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years upon conviction.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).



---

## [Update on cluster of Candida auris cases in Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on Candida auris carrier cases, the spokesperson for Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital (HKBH) gave the following update today (September 3):

One more patient, a female aged 69 in the medical ward of HKBH, was confirmed to carry Candida auris without signs of infection. The patient is now being treated in isolation and is in stable condition.

The hospital will continue the contact tracing investigation of close contacts of the patient in accordance with the prevailing guidelines. A series of enhanced infection control measures have already been adopted to prevent the spread of Candida auris:

1. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the ward concerned;
2. Enhanced admission screening for patients and environmental screening procedures; and
3. Application of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff and patients.

The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation of the patient. The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

---

## [Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine worth about \\$3.5 million at airport \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (September 2) detected a passenger drug trafficking case at Hong Kong International Airport and seized about 4 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$3.5 million. A woman was arrested.

The 48-year-old female passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, yesterday. During customs clearance, Customs officers found the batch of suspected cocaine concealed in the interlinings of her carry-on suitcase. The woman was subsequently arrested.

The arrested person has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. The case will be brought up at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (September 4).

With the increasing number of visitors to Hong Kong, Customs will continue to apply a risk assessment approach and focus on selecting

passengers from high-risk regions for clearance to combat transnational drug trafficking activities.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).

