

CHP reminds public of precautions against cold weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 24) reminded the public, particularly the elderly and people with chronic illnesses, to adopt appropriate measures to protect their health in view of the cold weather.

Cold weather can easily trigger or exacerbate diseases, especially among the elderly and persons suffering from heart disease, respiratory illnesses or other chronic illnesses.

Elderly people have less insulating fat beneath their skin to keep them warm, and their body temperature control mechanisms may be weaker. Their bodies may not be able to respond appropriately to cold weather.

Some senior persons may have decreased mobility, which can impair their ability to generate and conserve body heat. Chronic illnesses, such as hypertension, diabetes and endocrine disorders, may undermine the health of elderly people and lower their metabolic rate, subsequently causing their bodies to generate less heat. Persons with chronic illnesses, such as chronic respiratory illnesses or heart disease, are vulnerable to disease aggravation due to cold weather.

The CHP reminded the public, in particular the elderly and persons with chronic illnesses, to adopt the following preventive measures:

- Take note of the weather forecast. Wear warm clothing, including hats, scarves, gloves and socks, accordingly;
- Consume sufficient food to ensure adequate calorie intake;
- Perform regular exercise to facilitate blood circulation and heat production;
- Stay in a warm environment and avoid prolonged outdoor exposure;
- Use heaters with care and maintain adequate indoor ventilation; and
- Seek medical advice if feeling unwell.

â€œIn addition, the public should avoid alcoholic beverages.

Drinking alcohol does not keep you warm. Alcohol accelerates the loss of body heat through dilated blood vessels, resulting in chilling instead.

Parents should ensure that babies are sufficiently warm, but it is also important to keep babies relatively lightly clothed to avoid overheating.

Parents should observe the following safety measures when putting their children to bed:

- Keep the room well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature;

- Always place babies on their backs to sleep. Leave their heads, faces and arms uncovered during sleep;
- Babies do not need pillows. Place babies on a firm and well-fitted mattress to sleep. Avoid soft objects, pillows and loose bedding;
- Let babies sleep in a cot placed near their parents' bed; and
- Maintain a smoke-free environment.

In addition, many respiratory pathogens, including influenza and SARS-CoV-2, may have increasing activity and community transmission during winter. Seasonal influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above, except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive seasonal influenza vaccinations early. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the CHP's [website](#).

A person infected with influenza and COVID-19 at the same time may be more seriously ill and have a higher risk of death. It is important for elderly persons, especially those residing in residential care homes, to receive both seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations. They should also receive an additional booster against COVID-19 according to recommendations as soon as possible. The public should also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against respiratory illnesses and note the following:

- Surgical masks can prevent the transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

Food-borne diseases, particularly those linked to hotpot cuisine, are also common in cold weather. The following preventive measures should be taken:

- Wash hands before handling and consuming food;
- Do not patronise unlicensed vendors or those with poor hygienic standards while selecting food;
- Wash and cook all food thoroughly;
- Vegetables should be washed thoroughly in clean running water before cooking and consumption. When appropriate, scrub hard-surfaced vegetables with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances, including pesticide residues and contaminants, from surfaces and crevices;
- Shrimps should be fully cooked until the shells turn red and the flesh turns white and opaque;
- For shellfish such as scallops and geoduck, scrub the shells thoroughly and remove the internal organs;
- Do not eat any undercooked freshwater aquatic products. To ensure that the food is thoroughly cooked, the centre of the food should reach a temperature of at least 75 degrees Celsius to destroy pathogen;
- Most hotpot ingredients should be stored in a refrigerator at 4 degrees C or below, while frozen food should be stored in a freezer at -18 degrees C or below;
- Never use raw eggs as a dipping sauce for hotpot; and
- Use different sets of chopsticks to handle raw and cooked food to avoid cross-contamination.

â€œIn addition, when using fuel-burning appliances, especially in indoor areas, the public should ensure adequate ventilation to avoid harmful exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) and prevent CO poisoning.

For more health information, the public may call the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111) or visit the [CHP's website](#) and [Facebook Fanpage](#).

The public may also call Dial-a-Weather (1878 200) or visit the [website of the Hong Kong Observatory](#) for the latest weather information and forecasts, or its [page on Weather Information for Senior Citizens](#).

Employers and employees should take precautions during cold weather

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Cold Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Cold Weather Warning is in force, they should take appropriate precautions such as reminding employees who have to work outdoors or in remote areas to wear appropriately

warm clothing, and make arrangements for employees to rotate from outdoor to indoor or sheltered work sites as far as possible. Employees should take note of the weather report, wear appropriately warm clothing and be mindful of their health conditions. They should notify their supervisors and seek medical help immediately if feeling unwell, such as having cold limbs and body shivering.

Invest Hong Kong reports information security incident

Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) announced today (February 23) that an information security incident was identified yesterday (February 22). The incident involved a malicious ransomware attack to part of InvestHK's computer systems.

A spokesman for InvestHK said that upon identification of the incident, the department has taken immediate measures to further tighten its IT security systems to prevent further ransomware attacks. It has also followed established guidelines and procedures and reported the case to the Police, the Digital Policy Office (DPO), the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data and the Security Bureau respectively on the same day. InvestHK condemns such malicious attacks and has already updated relevant access rights, isolated the affected systems, and activated back-up procedures.

InvestHK is working closely with the Police on the investigation. Preliminary findings indicated that the affected areas included an internal Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, intranet and part of InvestHK's website operations, such as the function to contact InvestHK via the website form and events updates. InvestHK's public services remain normal. Members of the public can continue to contact staff of InvestHK through telephone, email or face-to-face meetings.

Investigation is still underway to ascertain whether any personal data leakage is involved. Although this is an ongoing investigation, based on preliminary assessment, this could potentially include basic information on InvestHK's clients, such as the companies' contact information, and records of InvestHK staff. InvestHK will inform relevant parties if and when further updates are available.

The spokesman stressed that the department has been following Government procedures on information and cybersecurity. To further strengthen its system security measures, it is currently seeking advice from the DPO and has appointed experts to assist with the investigation and recovery. The department hoped the culprits can be brought to justice as soon as possible so as to safeguard information and cybersecurity.

The spokesman reiterated that InvestHK would not send embedded hyperlinks via emails, SMS messages or social media pages for collecting personal information or requesting for payment. It urges members of the public to stay alert and to refrain from clicking on any embedded links or providing any personal or financial information such as credit card information, or making any payment to suspicious emails or SMS messages. For enquiries, members of the public may call InvestHK General Enquiry Hotline at 3107 1000 or email enq@investhk.gov.hk.

CFS urges public not to consume a batch of French raw milk cheese suspected to be contaminated with Shiga toxin-producing E. coli

â€‹The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (February 23) urged the public not to consume a batch of raw milk cheese imported from France due to possible contamination with Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC). The trade should stop using or selling the affected product immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Morbier Jean Perrin 1/4 x 2
Brand: PERRIN VERMOT
Place of origin: France
Pack size: 1.8 kilograms
Best-before date: March 15, 2025
Batch number: 366
Importer: Chef's Garden Limited
Retailer: Feather & Bone

"The CFS received a notification from the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed of the European Commission that the above-mentioned product is being recalled in France and other countries due to possible contamination with STEC. Upon learning of the incident, the CFS immediately contacted local importers for follow-up. A preliminary investigation found that the aforementioned importer had imported into Hong Kong eight pieces, weighing about 13.7 kilograms in total, of the affected batch of the product concerned, which has been distributed to the retailer mentioned above for sale," a spokesman for the CFS said.

The importer concerned has stopped sale and discarded the unsold products of the affected batch and initiated a recall according to the CFS's instructions. Enquiries about the recall can be made to the importer's

hotline at 2819 7500 during office hours.

"People will contract STEC-causing gastro-intestinal disease through consumption of contaminated water or undercooked and contaminated foods. Intestinal bleeding and serious complications such as hemolytic uraemic syndrome may also develop in some people," the spokesman said.

The CFS will alert the trade to the incident, and will continue to follow up and take appropriate action. The investigation is ongoing.

HAD opens temporary cold shelters

â€œIn view of the cold weather, the Home Affairs Department has opened 18 temporary cold shelters in various districts today (February 23) for people in need of the service. The temporary shelters will remain open when the Cold Weather Warning is in force.

Clean mattresses and blankets/quilts, hot meals and hot water will be provided to shelter users free of charge during the opening of the temporary shelters.

To ensure that cold shelter users can rest in a quiet and undisturbed environment, members of the public or agencies wishing to make donations to shelter users are requested to register with the staff of the shelter first. Donors will then be directed to place the donated items at a specified indoor location. The staff will help notify the shelter users to collect the items on their own.

Anyone seeking temporary refuge, or those with any questions about the donation arrangements at the cold shelters, may call the department's hotline 2572 8427 for more information.

The 18 temporary cold shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Island:

Central and Western:

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex,
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern:

Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern:

Lei Tung Community Hall
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai:

Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon:

Kowloon City:

Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices,
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong:

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po:

Nam Cheong District Community Centre
1 Cheong San Lane, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin:

Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong:

Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories:

Islands:

Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building, 39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing:

Tai Wo Hau Estate Community Centre
15 Tai Wo Hau Road, Kwai Chung

North:

Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung:

Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin:

Lung Hang Estate Community Centre

Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po:

Tai Po Community Centre

2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan:

Lei Muk Shue Community Hall

G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun:

Butterfly Bay Community Centre

Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long:

Long Ping Community Hall

Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long