

CHP investigates three food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 17) investigating three epidemiologically linked food poisoning clusters affecting 11 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The three clusters involved five males and six females, aged between 28 and 35, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting about 16 to 61 hours after eating at Oyster Station (Restaurant name on licence: OS Oyster & Steak House) at 7/F, 1 Knutsford Terrace in Tsim Sha Tsui on February 10, 11 and 12.

Of those affected, six persons sought medical advice. None of them required hospitalisation.

A preliminary investigation by the CHP revealed that the affected persons had consumed common food, including raw oysters, at the above restaurant. The incident might have been caused by norovirus.

Personnel from the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department have conducted an inspection at the restaurant and instructed the premises concerned to suspend serving incriminated food items with immediate effect and carry out cleaning and disinfection of the premises. The officers have also provided health education related to food safety and environmental hygiene to the staff of the premises.

The CHP and CFS's investigation is ongoing.

Norovirus infection typically causes acute gastroenteritis. It is also a common cause of food poisoning and is very often related to consumption of undercooked or raw shellfish. These diseases affect people of all age groups and tend to be more common during winter.

To prevent foodborne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out, one should:

- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters at a buffet;
- Choose pasteurised eggs, egg products or dried egg powder for dishes that often use lightly cooked or uncooked eggs;
- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Store and reheat precooked or leftover foods properly before consumption;

- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hotpot or barbecue meal;
 - Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
 - Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked foods;
 - Avoid patronising illegal food hawkers;
 - Drink boiled water;
 - Susceptible populations, including those with weakened immunity, the elderly, pregnant women and young children are at a higher risk of foodborne diseases, so they should not consume raw or undercooked foods;
 - Refrain from trying to use salt, vinegar, wine or wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
 - Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.
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LegCo to consider Road Tunnels (Government) (Amendment) Bill 2024

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) will hold a meeting on Wednesday (February 19) at 11am in the Chamber of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, the Second Reading debate on the Road Tunnels (Government) (Amendment) Bill 2024 will resume. If the Bill is supported by Members and receives its Second Reading, it will stand committed to the committee of the whole Council. After the committee of the whole Council has completed consideration of the Bill and its report is adopted by the Council, the Bill will be set down for the Third Reading.

The Second Reading debate on the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Tax Deductions for Assisted Reproductive Service Expenses) Bill 2024 will also resume. If the Bill is supported by Members and receives its Second Reading, it will stand committed to the committee of the whole Council. After the committee of the whole Council has completed consideration of the Bill and its report is adopted by the Council, the Bill will be set down for the Third Reading.

In addition, The Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong Bill will be introduced into the Council for the First Reading and the Second Reading. The Second Reading debate on the Bill will be adjourned.

On Members' motions, Mr Stanley Ng will move a motion on protecting the mental health of employees. The motion is set out in Appendix 1. Mr Kwok Wai-keung will move separate amendment to Mr Ng's motion.

Mr Edward Leung will move a motion on comprehensively regulating unsolicited calls. The motion is set out in Appendix 2. Dr Johnny Ng and Mr

Shiu Ka-fai will move separate amendments to Mr Leung's motion.

During the meeting, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, Mr Shiu Ka-fai, will present the "Report of the Public Accounts Committee on Report No. 83 of the Director of Audit on the Results of Value for Money Audits" and address the Council.

Members will also ask the Government 22 questions on various policy areas, six of which require oral replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk). Members of the public can watch or listen to the meeting via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meeting at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.

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Clusters of Norovirus and Influenza A cases announced at Kowloon Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority.

The spokesman for Kowloon Hospital made the following announcement today (February 17):

Four patients (aged 81 to 94) in a male rehabilitation ward have presented with symptoms of fever or respiratory symptoms since February 7. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patients, and their test results were positive for Influenza A. One patient is in critical condition due to his underlying illness. The three remaining patients are in stable condition.

In addition, five patients (aged 50 to 98 years old) in a female respiratory medicine ward have presented with vomiting or diarrhoea symptoms since February 3 and were positive for Norovirus after viral tests. The five patients are now being treated in isolation and are in stable condition.

The hospital has enhanced the following infection control measures in accordance with prevailing guidelines in the two wards concerned:

1. thorough cleaning and disinfection of the wards concerned, including the environment and medical equipment;
2. enhanced medical surveillance of the patients and environmental

- screening procedures in the wards concerned; and
3. applied stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow up.