

# Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 1) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From February 21 to 27, one community-acquired LD case was reported. The case involves a male patient aged 90 with underlying illnesses who lives in Nan Hai Mansion, Kennedy Town.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of February 27, three LD cases had been reported this year. In 2020 and 2019, there were 104 and 105 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh-water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2  $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
  2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
  4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
  5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's LD page, the Code of Practice for Prevention of LD and the Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's risk-based strategy for prevention and control of LD.

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## [Special Subsidy Scheme for Persons with Permanent Stoma opens for applications](#)

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (March 1) announced that with effect from March 2021, the Community Care Fund assistance programme of the

Pilot Scheme on Providing Special Subsidy for Persons with Permanent Stoma from Low-income Families for Purchasing Medical Consumables has been regularised and renamed as the Special Subsidy Scheme for Persons with Permanent Stoma to provide a continuous subsidy for the eligible persons in need to relieve their financial burdens.

An eligible applicant must be a person with permanent stoma (excretory stoma) as assessed by a recognised specialist of the medical and health profession, not being a recipient of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, passing the financial assessment on household income and asset limits, and without receiving any relevant subsidy for purchasing medical consumables for the stoma from other funding sources in the past one year. The rate of subsidy an applicant is eligible for is based on the SWD's assessment on the applicant's monthly household income. The maximum subsidy level is capped at \$1,000 per month.

The SWD has invited eligible beneficiaries of the existing Pilot Scheme to apply for the Special Subsidy Scheme. In addition, the Special Subsidy Scheme is also open for new applications. Applicants may send the completed application form, together with supporting documents, to the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch of the SWD (in person or by post to the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch (Oi Kwan Road Office), Room 118, 1/F, Lady Trench Training Centre, 44 Oi Kwan Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong).

For details of the Special Subsidy Scheme, including the programme brief, eligibility criteria and relevant household income and asset limits, please refer to the website of the SWD ([www.swd.gov.hk](http://www.swd.gov.hk)) or click [here](#). Application forms can also be downloaded [here](#).

For enquiries, please contact the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch of the SWD during office hours (Tel: 3468 2756; fax: 2151 0434; email: [acorm5@swd.gov.hk](mailto:acorm5@swd.gov.hk)).

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## **Golden Dragon Troupe to perform rescheduled "The Butterfly Goblet" and "Story of a Sing-song Girl" in March**

The Golden Dragon Troupe will stage two Cantonese operas, namely "The Butterfly Goblet" and "Story of a Sing-song Girl", in March. The performances were originally scheduled in last December.

In "The Butterfly Goblet", an old fisherman, Hu Mingheng, catches a strange fish with a human head. Lu Shihuan, son of the Governor, tries to

snatch the fish by force, seriously injuring Hu. Standing up for Hu, Tian Yuchuan injures Shihuan. Hu escapes back to his boat and tells his daughter, Fengjiao, what has happened before he dies. Yuchuan knows he is in big trouble, and also finds his way to the boat. The two young people meet. Fengjiao lets Yuchuan hide in the boat to escape the manhunt. A love story begins and Yuchuan gives her his family heirloom, a butterfly goblet, as a betrothal pledge.

Shihuan finally loses his life. General Tang Yang receives an order to hunt down the murderer Yuchuan but to no avail. Instead, Tang arrests Yuchuan's father, the chief official of Jiangxia prefecture. As a fugitive, Yuchuan changes his name to Lei Chuanzhou. A decree comes from the Emperor and Governor Lu is sent on an expedition. With Yuchuan's assistance, Governor Lu wins the battle. In appreciation of his contribution to the victory, Governor Lu wants to betroth his daughter to Yuchuan. The situation turns out to be very complicated as love and relationships become entangled.

"The Butterfly Goblet"

7.30pm, March 12 (Friday)

Auditorium, Tuen Mun Town Hall

Tickets: \$140, \$200, \$260 and \$320

7.30pm, March 25 (Thursday)

Theatre, Ko Shan Theatre

Tickets: \$140, \$200, \$280 and \$380

In "Story of a Sing-song Girl", a local upstart and bully, Wu Shou, tricks Yang Tianbao into believing that his wife, Wei Huachou, is unfaithful. The couple quarrels and Tianbao departs home in anger, leaving Huachou behind with his younger sister. Having succeeded with his scheming, Wu visits on the pretext of collecting rent. He makes lascivious passes at Tianbao's sister. In a bid to save her, Huachou kills Wu with a pair of scissors. She is arrested and sentenced to death.

Meanwhile, Tianbao has saved the Emperor and is awarded the title of Prince of Fidelity and Bravery. On his way back to his home town, he passes by the execution ground and finds his wife about to be executed. This reminds him of her infidelity and is overwhelmed with anger. Fortunately, Huachou's younger brother comes to her rescue in the nick of time. Knowing that they have been fooled by Wu, the couple makes up and gets back together.

"Story of a Sing-song Girl"

7.30pm, March 13 (Saturday)

Auditorium, Tuen Mun Town Hall

Tickets: \$140, \$200, \$260 and \$320

The cast of the performances includes Loong Koon-tin, Tang Mi-ling, Chan Hung-chun, Lui Hung-kwong, Chan Ka-ming and Sun Kim-long.

The performances by the Golden Dragon Troupe are presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Tickets are now available at URBTIX ([www.urbtix.hk](http://www.urbtix.hk)). Ticket holders of "The Butterfly Goblet" originally

scheduled on December 15 (Tuesday) at the Theatre, Ko Shan Theatre, can keep the original tickets intact (with stubs) to attend the rescheduled performance on March 25. Please note that some seats will be rearranged. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit [www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese\\_opera/programs\\_1053.html](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_1053.html). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999.

A pre-performance talk and a post-performance talk in Cantonese will be held at 7.30pm on March 3 (Wednesday) and at 7.30pm on April 1 (Thursday) at AC2, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Speakers will include Loong Koon-tin and Tang Mi-ling. Admission is free. Telephone registration is required, and please call 2268 7267 from 10am today onwards. Limited seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Details can be found on the above website.

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## **Public consultation on fourth phase of Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme launched**

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (March 1) launched a three-month public consultation on the proposal on the coverage of additional products under the fourth phase of the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme (MEELS). The consultation period will end on May 31.

The initial phase of the MEELS was introduced in 2008 under the Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Products) Ordinance (Cap. 598), requiring energy labels to be shown on all prescribed products for supply in Hong Kong in order to enable the public to select energy efficient appliances and save more energy. The scope of product coverage was planned to be expanded in phases. The Government now proposes to extend the coverage of the fourth phase of the MEELS to include three additional types of products, namely Light Emitting Diode (LED) lamps, gas cookers and gas instantaneous water heaters.

To prepare for the implementation of the fourth phase of the MEELS, the EMSD established task forces comprising representatives of the trade associations concerned and stakeholders in 2019, and received general support for the proposal. Moreover, the EMSD consulted the Energy Efficiency and Conservation and Renewable Energy Sub-committee of the Energy Advisory Committee in February this year, and the committee members also expressed support for the proposal.

The proposal of the fourth phase of the MEELS mainly includes:  
(a) the newly covered products;

- (b) the energy efficiency test standard of the products;
- (c) the determination of energy efficiency grades;
- (d) the specifications of the energy labels; and
- (e) the arrangements during the transitional period.

The EMSD welcomes views from the public on the proposal mentioned above. The consultation documents are available for viewing and downloading at the EMSD's website ([www.emsd.gov.hk/energylabel/en/consultation.html](http://www.emsd.gov.hk/energylabel/en/consultation.html)).

Members of the public may submit their views to the EMSD by post (Energy Efficiency Office, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, 3 Kai Shing Street, Kowloon Bay, Hong Kong), email ([meels\\_review@emsd.gov.hk](mailto:meels_review@emsd.gov.hk)) or fax (2890 6081).

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## **Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.