

# **Update on Candida auris cases in Princess Margaret Hospital**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority.

Regarding an earlier announcement on Candida auris carrier cases, the spokesperson for Princess Margaret Hospital made the following update today (December 24):

Having conducted contact tracing, one more 82-year-old male patient in a surgical ward of the hospital was confirmed as a Candida auris carrier while not having signs of infection. The patient is now being treated under isolation and in stable condition.

The hospital will continue the contact tracing 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 wards concerned;
2. Enhanced admission screening for patients and environmental screening procedures;
3. Application of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene for staff and patients;
4. Introduction of PCR rapid testing for early identification of carriers; and
5. Application of designated equipment for patient use to avoid cross-infection.

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.

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## **Prepackaged dried mango sample detected with lead at level that may have breached Food Adulteration**

# (Metallic Contamination) Regulations

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (December 24) announced that a prepackaged dried mango sample was detected with lead, a metallic contaminant, at a level which may have contravened the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations. The CFS is following up on the incident.

Product details are as follows:

Product: Dried Mangoes  
Brand: 7D  
Place of origin: The Philippines  
Manufacturer: FPD Food International, Inc  
Retailer: HKTVMall  
Net weight: 200 grams per pack  
Best-before date: April 15, 2021

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from an online shop for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained lead at a level of 1.58 parts per million (ppm). The CFS' risk assessment revealed that the metal level of the sample is dangerous or prejudicial to health."

The spokesman added, "Long-term excessive dietary exposure to lead may cause anaemia and damage to the nervous system and kidneys."

The CFS has informed the retailer concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of the product. The retailer concerned has also initiated a recall according to the CFS' instructions. Members of the public may call the retailer's hotline at 3145 6368 during office hours for enquiries about the recall. The CFS is also tracing the source of the affected product.

According to the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap 132V), any person who sells food with metallic contamination in an amount that is dangerous or prejudicial to health is liable upon conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

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

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## Company and its director fined

## [\\$150,000 for contravening Employment Ordinance](#)

South Pacific Airlines Limited and its director were prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for failing to pay employees' wages and the sums awarded by the Labour Tribunal (LT) under the Employment Ordinance (EO). The company and its director pleaded guilty earlier at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts and were each fined \$75,000 today (December 24), making a total fine of \$150,000. The company and its director were also ordered to pay an outstanding sum of about \$4 million to the employees concerned.

The company failed to pay four employees wages totalling about \$1.3 million as required by the EO, and five employees the awarded sum of about \$4 million, within 14 days after the date set by the LT. The director was convicted for his consent, connivance or neglect in the above offences.

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers, directors and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages to employees within the time limit stipulated in the EO and pay the awarded sums as ordered by the LT or the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board," a spokesman for the LD said.

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"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

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## [Update on cluster of Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae cases in Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital made the following announcement today (December 24):

An 84-year-old patient in a female medical ward was confirmed as being infected with Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) on December 22. In accordance with the prevailing guidelines, the hospital commenced contact tracing and identified four more female patients (aged 66 to 92) as being CPE carriers without clinical symptoms. One of the patients has been discharged while the remaining three patients are being treated under isolation and in stable condition.

The hospital infection control team has followed up with the departments concerned and the Centre for Health Protection. The following enhanced infection control measures have already been adopted in the ward:

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

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

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## **Further assistance from Arts and Culture Sector Subsidy Scheme under Anti-epidemic Fund**

The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) announced today (December 24) that, since arts groups have been hard hit by the closure of performance venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) as a result of the fourth wave of the COVID-19 epidemic, the HAB will deploy its own resources to provide an additional subsidy of \$80,000 per arts group to the 44 arts groups funded by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), 14 venue partners (VPs) under the LCSD and 41 Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme (ACDFS) grantees.

"To safeguard public health, performance venues of the LCSD have been completely closed since December 2 in accordance with the anti-epidemic requirements. We understand that this measure has seriously affected the programme arrangements and operation of arts groups," the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, said.

"Therefore, in addition to the appropriation from the Anti-epidemic Fund, I have decided to deploy the limited resources of the HAB to support about 100 arts groups funded by the HKADC, VPs under the LCSD and ACDFS grantees. A subsidy of \$80,000 will be provided to each of the arts groups."

On December 21, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved the proposal to inject \$6.4 billion into the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF) to provide further relief to businesses and individuals hard hit by the tightening of social distancing measures. The AEF Steering Committee has approved the actual measures under the AEF today. Amongst the measures, the

Government will once again provide further one-off assistance of \$7,500 to each eligible individual arts practitioner and freelancer who received the subsidy through application from the HKADC and the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong. It is expected that about 5 000 individual arts practitioners and freelancers will benefit.

The HAB expects that the above subsidy will be disbursed from January 2021.

As some companies in the performing industry had hired the venues of the LCSD to organise pop concerts, the HAB has included a measure to provide subsidies to companies in the performing industry which organised pop concerts in the third round of injection into the AEF. The Performing Industry Association (Hong Kong) Limited has confirmed the implementation details and will disburse a subsidy of \$100,000 to each of the eligible companies as soon as practicable.