

CHP investigating two cases of Legionnaires' Disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 14) investigating two cases of Legionnaires' Disease.

The first case involved a 43-year-old man living in Sai Kung. He developed cough, runny nose, sore throat and fever since July 12.

He was admitted to Tseung Kwan O Hospital (TKO) on July 17 and was discharged against medical advice on July 20. The patient was re-admitted to TKO hospital for persistent fever and cough on July 22 and was discharged on July 24. His current condition is stable.

His sputum sample was tested positive for Legionella pneumophila.

The second case involved a 70-year-old man living in Wong Tai Sin. He had history of chronic illness. He presented with fever and cough since August 12 and was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital the next day. He is now in critical condition.

His urine sample was tested positive for Legionella pneumophila.

CHP's investigation showed that both of the patients had no travel history before onset of the symptoms. Their family members are asymptomatic.

These are the 23rd and 24th Legionnaires' Disease cases reported this year. Thirteen cases were reported in 2008, 11 in 2007 and 16 in 2006.

To prevent the disease, people are reminded to observe the following:

* An individual may reduce his/her susceptibility to the disease by avoiding smoking and excessive drinking, and maintaining good health.

* People handling garden soils, composts and potting mixes should take the following precautions:

- Gently water gardens and composts using low pressure.
- Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face.
- Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants.
- Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.
- Wash hands carefully afterwards.

* Proper design, operation and maintenance of man-made water systems.


For more information about the good practices to be followed in the design, installation, operation and maintenance of man-made water systems, please visit the website of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (www.emsd.gov.hk/emsd/eng/pps/oa_ld_pub_cp.shtml) for the Code of Practice published by the Prevention of Legionnaires' Disease Committee in 2007.

Information on Legionnaires' Disease and advice on preventive measures can also be found on the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk).

Ends/Friday, August 14, 2009

Issued at HKT 19:36

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