



二〇一一年八月十五日

## 提防微針美容導致細菌感染

坊間時興微針美容，隨著自助式微針美容用品出售，消費者可輕易購得自行施用，消費者委員會提醒愛美一族，使用微針工具慎防美容不成反致「毀容」。

消費者委員會自2007年12月至今，共接獲43宗有關微針美容的投訴，其中超過10宗個案的投訴人指，於接受服務後，皮膚出現不同程度的不良反應，包括痕癢、紅腫、乾燥、脫皮、疼痛、出現紅疹、嚴重暗粒、暗瘡惡化、毛孔發炎，甚至患上皮膚炎等。

微針美容是使用一些備有很多微細刺針的滾輪或印章，在皮膚特定位置滾動或輕力按壓，過程中，微針刺入皮膚，於皮膚表面造成許多微細的管道 / 傷口，聲稱可刺激真皮層製造膠原蛋白及幫助護膚精華滲透。

微針的物料有矽、不銹鋼、鈦、玻璃和聚合物等，坊間較普遍的微針長度有0.25毫米、0.5毫米和1.0毫米，每支微針工具售價約為數百元。

消委會呼籲消費者在接受微針美容療程前，應瞭解下列各項風險：

**風險1：重用微針可致微生物感染。**

有供應商表示，只要消毒得宜，微針滾輪或印章可重複使用多次，使用前只須用熱水沖洗或以醫療消毒溶液浸洗。

然而，有關的消毒方法不足以消除所有細菌、真菌和病毒。於皮膚上施用未徹底消毒的微針工具，可引致皮膚嚴重發炎。

**風險2：共用微針可傳染愛滋病及肝炎**

微針會刺入皮膚，與人共用微針工具會增加病毒和細菌感染的機會。皮膚專科醫生警告，愛滋病、乙型和丙型肝炎等病毒均可透過未經消毒或消毒不當的微針針頭傳染。

### 風險3：皮膚護理用品也可致細菌感染

當皮膚表面有許多微細傷口時，會減低皮膚的保護能力。如果護膚品的品質欠佳，或已受微生物污染，細菌亦可能透過微針，從皮膚表面的傷口進入皮膚裏面，引致皮膚炎。

### 風險4：有問題皮膚接受微針療程可能令問題惡化

如面部皮膚有傷口、發炎或含膿的暗瘡，絕不宜接受微針療程，否則微針可能將引致暗瘡的細菌帶入皮膚深層，令膿瘡問題惡化。

### 風險5：微針療程會引致皮膚紅腫乾燥

微針刺穿皮膚會引致人體的炎症反應，包括紅腫、局部灼熱、疼痛，發炎情況一般會持續3至14天。針愈長，療程會愈痛，傷口需要較長時間癒合。經微針處理後，皮膚表面水分容易流失，令皮膚乾燥。

### 風險6：操作不善添皮肉之苦

操作微針工具需要專業知識和純熟的技巧，控制不善可能會刺傷眼睛，因急於求成而用力過度，或使用太頻密，也可令皮膚組織受損。

在香港，微針療程仍未屬於治療皮膚疾病的主流療法，所採用的微針器具也未獲醫學界普遍地界定為醫療儀器。根據衛生署的醫療儀器自願表列制度，暫未有微針工具表列為醫療儀器。

消委會認為，有必要加強對有關美容工具及服務的管制。由於微針屬於侵入性工具，消委會也建議消費者，接受療程前應了解自己的需要及有關風險，也不宜購買微針工具自行使用。

## 電風扇測試報告

一項電風扇安全表現測試顯示，大部份測試樣本的絕緣或防觸電保護不足，僅一樣本通過全部安全測試項目。

新一期《選擇》月刊報道機電工程署的電風扇測試。測試包括 12 款電風扇（扇葉直徑由 12 至 16 吋），2 款屬座檯式、4 款座地/座檯兩用式、6 款座地式。售價由港幣 189 元至 988 元。

測試根據國際標準（IEC60335-2-80），檢測樣本的安全程度，包括絕緣及防觸電保護、結構及接線、物料耐熱及阻燃性、運行溫度及不正常操作、機械穩定性及安全性、標示說明等。

9 款樣本的馬達絕緣線圈與鐵心或鐵殼之間的分隔距離不足，絕緣或防觸電保護未如理想。

電風扇可能長時間運作，絕緣膠料須具備一定阻燃能力及耐熱能力，兩款樣本未能通過相關的球壓測試，其中一款亦與另一樣本在物料阻燃性方面有改善空間。

就安全使用電風扇，《選擇》月刊提醒消費者注意以下事項：

擺放位置及使用方面：

- 把風扇放在堅固、平穩及不易翻倒的地方使用。
- 留適當的空間讓風扇擺動和散熱。
- 不要放在容易被濺濕的地方，例如窗邊或浴室內，以免有觸電危險。
- 風扇附近切勿放置易燃物品或容易飄進風扇外罩的東西，例如窗簾或紙張。
- 切勿讓小孩子將手指或其他物件放進護罩內，以免發生危險。
- 如室內無人，切勿開動風扇。
- 如長期不使用電風扇，應將電源插頭拔掉。

清洗及保養方面：

- 遵照說明書指示，定期清洗電風扇。
- 清洗時必須先拔掉電源插頭及不要讓水分濺進電風扇內部。
- 如電風扇外殼破爛，便不應使用。
- 留意隨電風扇擺動的軟電線有否因長期使用而損壞，以免出現電線短路或帶電部分外露的危險。
- 電風扇若操作有異，應立即停用，交由合資格人士檢查及維修。

## 消委會首次測試電壓力煲

繼六月份《選擇》月刊報道傳統壓力煲測試報告，消費者委員會再測試電壓力煲。

最新的電壓力煲測試，參考歐洲傳統式壓力煲標準（EN 12778）及相關國際家庭電器安全標準（IEC60335-2-15）進行，測試 6 款樣本，售價約由港幣 500 元至 3,000 元。

電壓力煲操作原理與傳統壓力煲相同，利用高氣壓提升水的沸點，使鍋內食物更快煮熟。但電壓力煲並非單靠限壓閥控制壓力及溫度，還配合其他限溫裝置，達到更全面安全保護。

測試樣本中只有兩款同時配備安全閥，其他樣本則靠膠圈排氣減低過高壓力。

能源效益方面，測試結果顯示，售價最便宜的樣本能源效益表現較佳。使用傳統煮食方法煲粥、紅豆沙或牛腩，通常都頗花時間，但電壓力煲產生的高壓使鍋內食物更快煮熟，加上內鍋密封兼有隔熱設計，減少熱流失，整個烹調過程通常用不到一度電，耗費少於一港元，相當化算。

試驗又比較了電壓力煲與傳統壓力煲效能，以煲熱 2 升水至 90°C 計算，電壓力煲平均需港幣 0.28 元；而用傳統壓力煲以煤氣爐加熱，煲熱 2 升水費用平均為港幣 0.35 元。但如傳統壓力煲以電磁爐加熱，則平均耗費只需港幣 0.25 元，與電壓力煲的耗費相若。

最新一期《選擇》月刊提供使用電壓力煲的安全貼士：

- 依照說明書的指示烹調。
- 使用前要檢查限壓閥是否暢通及膠圈有否變形。
- 烹調食物時，須依照方法或食譜指示，注入適量的水及食物。不應放入超過說明書建議容量的食物。
- 對於易膨脹的食物如豆類或米類，要酌量減少分量。

- 切勿在烹煮流質食物（如煲粥或煲湯）或易膨脹的食物時，使用排汽方法降壓，否則流質食物有機會隨蒸汽噴出，易膨脹的食物有機會堵塞閥門。

- 烹調後，開蓋前必須先進行降壓，確定煲內壓力完全降低，才可打開煲蓋。

- 切勿沖洗或浸洗電壓力煲身，應用濕布除去機身污漬。

## iDTV測試 · 表現差異大

iDTV 的功能越來越多樣化，除了有內置數碼電視廣播接收的基本功能外，部分更可錄影，甚至具備 3D 效果。但一項測試顯示，各型號在不同功能上，表現有很大差異，消費者購買前應審慎比較。

消費者委員會委託德國實驗室測試 20 款 iDTV 性能，包括 15 款 42 吋屏幕及 5 款 40 吋屏幕樣本，價錢由港幣 3,999 至 18,380 元。

測試樣本包括 17 款樣本是 LED 背光照明的液晶(LCD)屏幕、2 款是熒光燈(CCFL)背光照明的液晶屏幕，及一款等離子(Plasma)屏幕。

測試審視各樣本的畫質、音質、使用方便程度、錄影功能、多功能程度、特殊使用及省電程度。測試結果重點如下：

- 5 款樣本由於採用鏡面設計，出現嚴重反光問題，使用時或需拉上窗簾或調校室內光線。去年進行的同類測試時，20 款樣本中只有一款出現反光問題。

- 4 個樣本具備 3D 功能，但表現差異大。樣本出現的問題是呈輕微閃爍、互相干擾、或影像粗糙。僅得一個樣本的 3D 效果得滿分。此外，消費者觀賞 3D 影片，亦需配帶主動式快門或被動式偏光的 3D 眼鏡。前者設計較複雜，重量為 35 至 58 克，售價約港幣 680 元至 1,280 元。後者較為輕巧，只重約 15 克，售價普遍低於港幣 25 元。

- 大部分樣本的音質功能表現令人失望，主要原因是機身纖薄，只能內置小型揚聲器，影響質素。

— 大部分(17 個)樣本都擁有錄影功能，包括即時錄影或預校錄影。部分樣本的功能較為靈活，例如錄影期間，可轉換至其他相同廣播頻率的頻道，或播放較早前已錄影的片段。

— 大部分樣本的對比及光度測試表現理想。

— 省電程度方面，假設電視機每天啓動 4 小時，20 小時處於備用狀態，各樣本每年的耗電支出由港幣 124 元至 495 元。7 個樣本每年電費低於港幣 160 元。其中一款樣本設置預校錄影後，便不能進入備用狀態，此狀態下的耗電量高達 26 瓦特。

消費者使用 iDTV 時，宜注意以下環保小貼士：

— 定期按照說明書指示清潔電視機，以免塵埃積聚；好好保養電視機，延長其壽命。

— 若長時間不看電視，應將電源關掉，避免處於備用狀態。

— 若遙控器內的電池耗盡，可考慮轉用充電池。

## 私家看護服務調查

當有親人身體狀況欠佳或患病而需要特別照顧，若非使用院舍服務，聘用私家看護或家居護理服務或會是一個選擇。

現時經中介公司提供的家居護理服務，涵蓋的服務範疇由較基本的日常照顧及健康護理，如協助進食、處理排泄、量度脈搏及血壓，以至較專業的護理，如傷口護理、鼻胃管餵飼、尿喉護理、腹膜透析及針藥注射等。

一般家居護理服務均按時收費。以提供 8 小時上門護理服務為例，登記護士的收費為港幣 880 元至 1,100 元，註冊護士的收費介乎港幣 1,130 元至 1,320 元，而保健員的收費則介乎港幣 460 元至 690 元。此外，一些並沒有在香港護士管理局註冊或登記，聲稱曾在內地接受護士訓練的人士的收費約港幣 490 元至 570 元。

如在早上十時前或十一時前，或於夜間急聘護士，收費按全更 12 小時計。如要求護士在早上六時半前或晚上十時後上下班，另需付的

士費。

市面上的家居護理中介公司會以配對方式，轉介相關的服務人員，不過消費者委員會發現，部分由公司推介的護理人員，是否能夠提供所需的服務成疑。

根據《護士註冊條例》的附屬法例規定，在本港受訓的註冊護士及登記護士須在經刊憲成為護士訓練學校的機構，分別接受最少三年及兩年的基礎訓練。任何沒有持有由香港護士管理局發出的有效的執業證明書的人，不得在本港執業為護士。任何人如非在香港護士管理局妥為註冊或登記成為護士，而採用或使用註冊護士或登記護士的稱號或名銜，即屬違法。

消費者如欲聘請註冊護士或登記護士作私家看護，可查閱有關人士的註冊證明書和執業證明書。註冊護士及登記護士的名冊可於香港護士管理局的網頁查閱([www.nchk.org.hk](http://www.nchk.org.hk))。

消費者如欲僱用保健員，應瞭解他們是否已獲社會福利署安老院牌照事務處註冊。

消費者在使用家居護理服務前，應注意以下事項：

- 徵詢專業醫護人員或家庭醫生的意見。
- 事前與提供服務的護理人員以電話溝通，以查詢其資歷、所接受的訓練以及工作經驗；並查閱有關證明文件。
- 向護理人員清楚交代接受護理服務者的身體情況，最好先擬定所需護理項目的清單，讓護理人員衡量是否可以勝任。
- 本港護士人手短缺，消費者應及早聯絡中介公司以作安排，部分私家看護服務需預早至少 2 至 3 天安排。
- 雙方應說明工作所需時數和工資的計算方法，例如是否包括交通費，逾時工作的工資計算，以及颱風或暴雨情況下的工作安排。
- 不應訂定超出護理人員能力以內的護理項目及要求他們做超出訂定的工作範圍。如對服務不滿，應先行溝通工作流程是否有不妥之處，有需要可考慮換人。

今日（八月十五日）《選擇》月刊記者招待會主持為消委會宣傳及社區關係小組委員梁光漢先生。

歡迎被邀出席新聞發布會的傳媒引用新聞稿的內容。

《選擇》月刊現已上網，網址為 <http://choice.yip.com.hk>，同時可透過電訊盈科固網及流動電話服務接收。

消費者委員會保留所有關於《選擇》月刊及網上《選擇》的權利（包括版權）。



消費者委員會  
CONSUMER COUNCIL

### **Beauty Treatment of Microneedle Therapy System May Cause Bacterial Infection**

Microneedle Therapy System (MTS) has recently become a fashionable beauty treatment. With the do-it-yourself MTS tools kit available on market, consumers can easily acquire one to conduct the treatment themselves. The Consumer Council however cautions beauty-conscious consumers of the use of MTS tools, which may result in skin problems.

The Consumer Council has received 43 complaint cases regarding microneedle treatments since December 2007. More than 10 cases reported different levels of adverse skin conditions such as itching, redness, dryness, peeling, pain, rash, worsened acne and pores inflammation or even dermatitis.

In the MTS treatment, a device, usually in the form of a roller or stamp with many fine needles, rolls over or presses on the specific skin areas which require treatment. During the process, the fine needles on the roller or stamp penetrate into the skin, creating multiple micro-wounds or micro-channels which claimed to stimulate the production of collagen on the dermis and enhance the absorption of skin care serums.

The microneedles are made of materials such as silicon, stainless steel, titanium, glass or polymers and the length of the fine needles varies. The most common are 0.25mm, 0.5mm and 1.0mm in length, and each roller or stamp costs several hundred dollars.

The Consumers Council urges consumers to be aware of the following risks before engaging in microneedle beauty treatment:

#### **Risk 1: Microbial infection caused by reuse of device**

Some manufacturers indicate that the microneedle roller or stamp can be used repeatedly as long as the device has been disinfected properly. Some sales people suggest rinsing the device with hot water or soaking in medical disinfectants before use.

However, the suggested procedures cannot kill all bacteria, fungi and viruses on the needles. Using the inadequately disinfected device on the skin may result in serious infection.

## Risk 2: Transmission of HIV and hepatitis through shared needles

Microneedles operate by penetrating into the skin. Sharing a device with others increases the risk of viral or bacterial infection. As well, dermatologists warn that viruses such as human immunodeficiency (HIV), hepatitis B and hepatitis C can be transmitted through shared MTS devices which are not properly disinfected.

## Risk 3: Bacterial infection caused by contaminated skin care products

The protection capability of the skin diminishes when it is wounded by the fine needles. If the skin care serums are of poor quality or contaminated, then bacteria may get inside the skin causing dermatitis.

## Risk 4: Skin problems may be worsen after treatment

If your face has open wounds, inflammation or acne with pus, you are seriously warned not to use the MTS treatment, otherwise the microneedles may bring bacteria into the dermis worsening the abscess.

## Risk 5: MTS treatment may cause swelling and redness

When the skin is injured by the fine needles of the device, it will result in a number of inflammatory responses such as redness, local burning sensation, pain and inflammation, which will last for 3 to 14 days. The longer the fine needles, the greater will be the pain during the treatment and the longer it will take to recover. The MTS treatment may also result in a dry skin condition due to the loss of skin moisture.

## Risk 6: Physical pain caused by poor operation

The operation of a microneedles device requires professional knowledge as well as experience and skills. Improper operation may injure one's eye if the device is applied on the skin near the eye. Pressing the device too hard on one's face, or using it too frequently may also cause damage to the skin tissue.

In Hong Kong, the MTS treatment is not a mainstream treatment against skin problems and MTS tools are not generally regarded as medical devices by the medical profession. Under the voluntary listing system of medical devices maintained by the Department of Health, no microneedles device has been listed as a medical device.

The Consumer Council calls for tightening the regulations on the provision of the relevant beauty devices and services. As the microneedles tool is an invasive tool, the Council recommends that consumers fully assess

their actual needs against the risks before taking the MTS treatment, and do not purchase the microneedles tool for self application.

### **Safety Test on Electric Fans**

The latest results on the safety of electric fans showed that most of the samples tested have not provided sufficient insulation or protection against electric shock. Only one sample passed all test items.

The latest issue of CHOICE Magazine reports the results of the safety test on electric fans, which were conducted by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. Twelve 12-inch to 16-inch fans were sampled, which included 2 table fans, 4 table /pedestal fans, and 6 pedestal fans, with prices ranging from HK\$189 to HK\$988.

The tests, made reference to the international safety standard IEC60335-2-80, covered the aspects of: insulation and protection against electric shock, construction and wiring, material resistance to heat and fire, operating temperature and abnormal operation, stability and mechanical hazards, and marking and instructions.

9 tested samples were found to have insufficient spacing between the insulated windings and the enclosure or core of the motor, which lead to unsatisfactory insulation or protection against electric shock.

Electric fans may operate continuously for long hours. The plastic materials should have adequate resistance to heat and fire. Two tested sample failed in the heat resistance test, and one of which was found also to have room for improvement in resistance to fire along with another sample.

Regarding the safe use of electric fans, the latest issue of CHOICE Magazine reminds consumers to take note of the following:

For placement and use:

- Place an operating electric fan on a hard and leveled surface, and make sure that it will not easily topple.
- Allow sufficient space for the fan's free movement and heat dissipation.
- Do not put the electric fan in a place which has splashing water such as in the bathroom or near the window, to avoid possible electric shock.
- Do not put the fan near inflammable materials or loose objects (e.g. curtain or paper), which are easily sucked into the fan.
- Do not let children put their fingers or other objects into the fan through the fan guard.

- Do not leave an operating fan unattended.
- Unplug from the power socket if the fan will not be in use for a long period of time.

For maintenance and cleaning:

- Clean the electric fan regularly and in accordance with the instructions provided.
- Clean the fan only after you disconnect the power. Do not let water get inside the fan.
- Stop using the fan if the fan guard is broken.
- Check regularly the flexible power cord which connects to the turning head to make sure it is not damaged due to prolonged use. A damaged cord may lead to a short circuit or may expose the live wire.
- If any abnormality is detected, stop using the fan and arrange for a check up and repair by a qualified electrical technician.

### **Consumer Council Conducted the First-ever Test on Electric Pressure Cookers**

Further to the safety test on conventional pressure cookers reported in the June issue of CHOICE magazine, the Consumer Council conducted another safety test on electric pressure cookers.

The latest test, making reference to the European standards on pressure cookers (EN 12778) and international safety standards on related home appliances (IEC60335-2-15), covered a total of 6 models of electric pressure cookers with retail prices ranging from around HK\$500 to HK\$3,000.

The operation of an electric pressure cooker is similar to that of the conventional pressure cooker; both are making use of the high air pressure developed inside the cooker which increases the water temperature and speeds up the cooking. However, an electric pressure cooker does not only rely on the pressure control device to control its pressure and temperature; it is fitted with other temperature sensing devices which offer more safety protection.

Among the tested models, 2 samples are equipped with safety valves while the rest of the samples use rubber seals to release extra high pressure.

The test revealed that the cheapest tested model achieved higher

energy efficiency. Cooking congee, red bean soup or beef brisket usually take a long time in traditional cooking methods, and it is more economical to use electric pressure cookers for such prolonged cooking. Due to high pressure cooking and use of an insulated inner pot to minimize heat loss, the whole cooking process normally uses less than one unit (one kilowatt-hour) of electrical energy and costs less than one HK dollar.

The cost of operating an electric pressure cooker and a conventional pressure cooker was compared. Taking an example of bringing 2 litres of water to 90°C, the average cost for using an electric pressure cooker was HK\$0.28 while it costs HK\$0.35 when using a conventional pressure cooker on a town gas cooktop. However, when an induction hob is used, the average cost of the conventional cooker drops to HK\$0.25, roughly the same as that of the electric pressure cooker.

The latest issue of CHOICE Magazine offers the following important safety tips for using electric pressure cookers:

- Follow the instructions closely when cooking.
- Make sure the pressure valve is free of obstruction, or the rubber seal is in good shape before cooking.
- Ensure the electric pressure cooker is filled with food and water according to the instructions or a recipe when cooking. Do not overfill the pressure cooker.
- When cooking with the food that will expand, such as rice and beans, the amount of food put inside the cooker has to be reduced according to the type.
- When cooking liquid food such as congee and soup, or food that will expand during cooking, do not depressurize the pressure cooker by opening the steam vent to quickly release the steam. Otherwise the liquid food inside the pressure cooker may be jetted out suddenly together with the steam and the steam vent may be blocked by the expanded food.
- At the end of cooking, reduce the pressure inside the cooker before opening the lid.
- Do not run water over or immerse the cooker into water. Rub off the dirt on the cooker with a damp cloth.

## **Test on the iDTV Revealed Considerable Discrepancy in Performance**

iDTV sets are more and more versatile these days. Apart from the standard feature of internal digital TV tuner, some also offer recording function and even 3D effect. But a test revealed that their performance varied vastly on different functions, consumers should compare carefully before making the purchase.

The Consumer Council has commissioned a specialized laboratory in Germany to conduct a performance test on 20 models of iDTV sets, 15 of them with 42-inch screen while 5 with 40-inch screen. Their retail prices ranged from HK\$3,999 to HK\$18,380.

17 samples used LED (Light Emitting Diode) backlight LCD display, 2 used CCFL (Cold Cathode Fluorescent Lamp) backlight LCD display, and the remaining one was of Plasma display.

The test evaluated the samples on picture quality, sound quality, ease of use, recording, versatility, special feature and energy efficiency. Highlights of the results are:

- 5 samples were found to have serious screen reflection problem due to their glossy display design. Users might need to close the curtain or adjust the room lighting when using these sets. In a similar test last year, only one out of 20 samples presented such problem.
- 4 samples offered 3D effect, but with varied performance. Problems detected included flickering, crosstalk and grainy images. Only one sample scored full mark in its 3D effect. All 4 samples required users to wear either active shutter or passive polarizer 3D eye-wears in order to see the effect. The former eye-wears were of more complicated design, weighed from 35g to 58g and priced from HK\$680 to HK\$1,280. The latter was much lighter at about 15g and usually sold under HK\$25.
- The sound quality of most samples was not satisfactory, probably due to the limitation of the very thin housing design where only weak speakers could be accommodated.
- Majority (17) of the samples had video recording function providing instant or timer recording. Some were of more flexible designs, for instance during the time of recording, those models allowed switching to other channels of the same broadcast frequency, or playing back of old recordings.
- The majority of samples performed well on contrast and brightness

testing.

- On energy efficiency, the annual running cost would range from HK\$124 to HK\$495 assuming daily stand-by mode of 20 hours and 4 hours of watching. The annual running cost of 7 samples would be below HK\$160 a year. One sample was unable to operate timer recording on true standby mode - when its timer recording was set, the standby power consumption was as high as 26 watt.

Consumers are advised to take note of the following green tips when using iDTV:

- For better maintenance of the TV, clean the set regularly according the instructions to prevent dust from gathering.
- Turn off the power supply instead of using standby mode if the TV is not to be in use for long period of time.
- Consider using re-chargeable battery when it is time to replace the battery of remote control.

### **Consumer Council Survey on Home Nursing Providers**

Home nursing services are often required by the frail and the sick who need assistance in daily living without necessarily resorting to institutional care.

Home nursing services provided through an agency cover a range of care from basic care like feeding, diaper changing, pulse taking and blood pressure measurement, to more professional services such as wound care, nasogastric tube feeding, urinary catheter care, peritoneal dialysis and injections.

Home nursing services are usually charged at an hourly rate. For an 8-hour session, service charge for enrolled nurses is HK\$880 to HK\$1,100 while registered nurses charge at a rate of HK\$1,130 to HK\$1,320. Hourly rates for Health Workers range from HK\$460 to HK\$690. The service charge for carers who have not registered or enrolled with the Nursing Council of Hong Kong but claimed to have nurse training in Mainland China range from HK\$490 to HK\$570.

For urgent appointment with a carer made before 10:00 am or 11:00 am, or in the evening, the rate will be calculated on a 12-hour whole shift basis. Consumers will have to pay extra for taxi fare if the carer is required to arrive or depart before 6:30 am or after 10:00 pm.

While many home nursing service agencies provide matching and referral services, the investigation of the Consumer Council revealed that carers recommended or referred by the agencies may not be well trained or qualified to provide care needed.

In accordance with the subsidiary legislation of the Nurses Registration Ordinance, registered nurses and enrolled nurses trained in Hong Kong are required to complete **minimum of 3 years' and 2 years' training in gazetted nurse** training schools for nurses respectively. Any person without a valid practicing certificate issued by the Nursing Council of Hong Kong shall not practice nursing in Hong Kong. For any person who is not duly registered or enrolled with the Nursing Council of Hong Kong, if he/she takes or uses the name or title of registered or enrolled nurse, it is a violation of law.

Consumers who wish to hire registered or enrolled nurses should check if the prospective candidates possess **valid registration and practicing certificates** to practise nursing in Hong Kong. The names of registered or enrolled nurses can be checked on the official website of the Nursing Council of Hong Kong ([www.nchk.org.hk](http://www.nchk.org.hk)).

For health workers, consumers should check if they have registered with the Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly of the Social Welfare Department.

Before engaging home nursing services, consumers are advised of the following:

- Consult **family doctors or health care professionals** before seeking home nursing services.
- **Arrange telephone interview with the carer to get more information about their qualifications, skills and experience concerned. Check the relevant documentary proof.**
- Explain clearly to the carer about the physical condition of the patient, and it will be even better to make a detailed list of service items required, so that the carer can assess whether he/she can meet the requirements.
- Do make early arrangements given the shortage of nurses in Hong Kong, as most appointments with private duty nurse have to be made at least 2 to 3 days in advance.
- There should be mutual agreement on the hours of service required and pay calculation, such as whether transport fees and overtime pay are included, as well as job arrangements when a rainstorm warning or typhoon signal is issued.

- Do not request for work that is beyond the carer's competencies and do not assign work other than job duties agreed by the carer. If the service is not satisfactory, communicate with the carer about the problems concerned before considering replacement the worker.

**CHOICE magazine is now also available online (at <http://choice.yip.com.hk>) and via fixed-line and mobile services of PCCW.**

Chairing the press conference today (August 15) on the publication of CHOICE issue number 418 is Mr. Philip LEUNG, Member of Publicity and Community Relations Committee of the Consumer Council.

**Members from the media who are invited by this Council to the Press Conference may quote the content of this Press Statement.**

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