

Hong Kong man dies of rare flesh-eating disease

September 13 2010

A Hong Kong man has died of a flesh-eating bug in the territory's second case of the rare disease in two months, the health department said Monday.

The 48-year-old tested positive after his death on September 10 for a type of [bacterium](#) that causes necrotising fasciitis, which can enter the skin through the tiniest cut before releasing flesh and muscle-destroying toxins.

The man suffered injuries to both calves in July this year, and was hospitalised on September 8 with leg pain and shortness of breath, the Centre for Health Protection of the Department for Health said in a statement.

He went into shock and had surgery to remove contaminated flesh.

"His condition deteriorated and he passed away on September 10," the department said.

Lab tests showed *Vibrio vulnificus*, a type of bacteria causing necrotising fasciitis, in his body. The case was referred to the coroner.

The man's death follows a case in August in which a [Hong Kong](#) woman of 68 was left fighting for her life after she hurt her finger handling a fish, causing infection with the same bacteria.

The bug devoured her left hand and ravaged her right leg, the health department said.

There are just 0.4 cases of necrotising fasciitis per 100,000 people worldwide annually, mainly among the over-60s, according to the Medscape online clinical information service.

Quick treatment with [antibiotics](#) is the only known cure.

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