



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**DOH ADVISES CONSUMERS NOT TO EAT MONK FISH BECAUSE
OF POSSIBLE HEALTH RISK**

HONOLULU — The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is warning consumers not to eat monk fish because of a possible health risk from a shipment of the monk fish to Hawaii that is under investigation by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Consumers who have purchased Monkfish are urged to return it to the place of purchase or discard it. Care should be used in handling the fish as a toxin may be present on the skin and flesh of the fish.

The Department was notified by the US Food and Drug Administration that an investigation is being conducted on product labeled as Monkfish because it may contain tetrodotoxin, a potent toxin. The Monkfish is not known to produce this toxin which is usually associated with certain types of Pufferfish. However two people in Chicago, IL fell ill after consuming soup made with the "monkfish". Consuming foods containing tetrodotoxin can result in life-threatening illness or death and can not be destroyed by cooking or freezing.

Initial symptoms may occur within 30 minutes to several hours after consuming food containing the toxin and characterized by lip and tongue tingling and then followed by facial and extremity tingling and numbness. Subsequent symptoms may include headache, balance problems, excessive salivation, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea with abdominal pain which can be severe. In severe cases, muscles can be paralyzed and death may follow resulting from respiratory muscle paralysis. Consumers experiencing these symptoms should seek immediate medical care.

At this time, no illnesses related to eating monk fish have been reported to the DOH.

The primary distributor, Hong Chang Corporation, Santa Fe Springs, California is currently recalling product labeled as Monkfish. At this time, Hong Chang Corp. and FDA are investigating how the problem occurred.

Approximately 64 cases of the product were shipped to Hawaii with the majority being retained by the local distributor. The remaining cases are being recalled from various restaurants and markets.

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