

MEDIA RELEASE

Death Cap mushroom alert due to recent heavy rain

ACT Chief Health Officer, Dr Paul Kelly, today alerted the community to the potential of Death Cap mushrooms growing around the ACT due to the recent heavy rainfall.

Dr Kelly said Death Cap mushrooms are extremely poisonous and can easily be confused with other wild mushrooms and the community are reminded not to pick or eat any wild mushrooms.

“Death Cap mushrooms are typically seen in Canberra from late March, although they can be seen at other times during the year dependant on weather conditions,” Dr Kelly said.

“With the recent heavy rain and sunny days, we are reminding all Canberrans not to pick or eat any wild mushrooms and to pass this message on to family and friends who are visiting or new to Canberra.

“It can be extremely difficult, even for the most experienced collectors, to distinguish a small Death Cap mushroom from an edible mushroom. For this reason, all mushrooms should be purchased from a reputable supplier.

“All parts of the Death Cap mushroom are poisonous, and eating just one can be fatal. Cooking the Death Cap mushroom does not make it safe to eat.

“Anyone who suspects they may have eaten Death Cap mushrooms should seek urgent medical attention at a hospital emergency department. The sooner treatment can begin, the better the patient’s chances of survival,” Dr Kelly said.

In the last 16 years, there have been four fatalities associated with Death Cap mushrooms in the ACT. During this period there have also been a number of poisonings associated with Death Cap mushrooms in the ACT.

In Canberra, Death Cap mushrooms grow mainly near established oak trees in the wet, warm weather typically observed in late summer and autumn.

Important information about the Death Cap mushroom is available on the ACT Health website at <http://www.health.act.gov.au/datapublications/fact-sheets/environmental-health>

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Media Contact:

ACT Health Media

0403 344 080

healthmedia@act.gov.au