

CFS actively follows up on food poisoning clusters involving lava cake

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department said today (November 29) that it is actively following up on four food poisoning clusters involving lava cake, including inspecting the restaurant concerned. A sample of lava cake collected from the restaurant was found to contain a pathogen, Group D Salmonella. The CFS is following up on the case.

"Upon notification by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health earlier, the CFS immediately sent staff to the restaurant concerned in Tsim Sha Tsui to conduct investigation and take food and environmental samples for testing. The test result showed the presence of Salmonella in 25 grams of the lava cake sample, exceeding the criterion of the Microbiological Guidelines for Food which states that Salmonella should not be detected in 25g of a ready-to-eat food sample," a CFS spokesman said.

The CFS has informed the restaurant concerned of the irregularity. The restaurant has already stopped selling and discarded the affected product according to the CFS's advice. The CFS has also provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the restaurant, and requested it to review and improve the food production process and carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence.

According to section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), all food available for sale in Hong Kong, imported or locally produced, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

"Salmonella infection may cause fever and gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea. The effects on infants, young children, the elderly and persons with a weak immune system could be more severe and may even lead to death," the spokesman said.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health.