

CFS announces test results of seasonal food surveillance project on lap-mei (with photo)

â€‹The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (December 14) announced the test results of a recently completed seasonal food surveillance project on lap-mei. Among 163 samples tested, except for two samples found with sodium content inconsistent with the declared values on their nutrition labels, all the remaining samples passed the tests. The CFS has announced the irregularities earlier, and the vendors concerned have also stopped selling the relevant batch of the affected products. Prosecutions will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "Lap-mei is popular in winter and the CFS has therefore collected a variety of lap-mei samples including Chinese pork sausages, Chinese liver sausages, preserved duck meat and preserved pork from different retailers including online retailers for chemical tests and nutrition content analyses."

Chemical tests targeted veterinary drug residues, metallic contaminants, preservatives usually found in preserved food, phthalates which may be found due to their widespread presence as environmental contaminants or transferring from food contact materials, as well as other food additives which may be used in the production process and colouring matters which are not permitted in food (including Rhodamine B and Red 2G). For nutrition content analyses, the contents of energy, carbohydrates, protein, total fat, saturated fatty acids, trans fatty acids, sodium and sugars of the samples were tested to check if they were consistent with their declared values on the nutrition label.

"Members of the public should maintain a balanced diet and avoid excessive consumption of lap-mei in view of its nitrate/nitrite level and potential risk of nitrosamine, as well as the relatively higher sodium, sugar and fat content in some lap-mei. Infants are highly susceptible to nitrite toxicity and should avoid consuming lap-mei, while for young children, the intake of lap-mei should also be restricted.

"Furthermore, the International Agency for Research on Cancer of the World Health Organization has classified processed meat as 'carcinogenic to humans' (Group 1). The public should avoid excessive consumption of processed meat to reduce the risk of developing colorectal cancer," the spokesman said.

The spokesman also called on the trade to comply with the legal requirements, follow good manufacturing practices and use permitted food additives in an appropriate manner. Retailers should source food from reliable suppliers and maintain a good recording system in accordance with the Food Safety Ordinance to allow source tracing if needed.

