

CFS announces test results of targeted surveillance of food delivered by online food delivery platforms

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (March 31) announced the test results of recently completed targeted surveillance on food delivered by online food delivery platforms. A total of 80 food samples were collected and all passed the tests.

"The CFS has been closely monitoring the safety of food put up for sale online and collects online food samples (including those purchased from online takeaway platforms) for testing under the routine food surveillance programme. In view of the soaring demand for ordering food via online food delivery platforms by the public amid the pandemic, the CFS has conducted a targeted surveillance project to collect various food types including cold beverages, cold desserts, salad, sushi, sashimi, sandwiches, siu-mei, burgers, dim sum, pizza, soup, rice dishes, congee, noodles and pasta from different online food delivery platforms for microbiological and chemical tests," a spokesman for the CFS said.

Microbiological tests covered different food poisoning pathogens. Chemical tests targeted metallic contaminants, colouring matters, preservatives, and veterinary drug residues.

To ensure food safety, consumers are advised to buy foods and order delivered meals from reliable shops and food premises. Consumers are also advised to check the conditions of foods carefully upon receipt and consume the delivered foods as soon as possible. Susceptible populations, including the elderly, young children, people with weakened immunity and pregnant women, should take extra precautions to avoid consuming high-risk foods.

In addition, food premises and food delivery platforms are also advised to minimise the time for food delivery and follow temperature control requirements, keeping hot food hot and cold food cold for safe delivered foods, i.e. above 60 degrees Celsius and at/below 4 degrees C respectively. If perishable foods cannot be kept at these temperature ranges, the two-hour and four-hour principle should be followed (i.e. prepared food should be discarded if it has been held at room temperature for more than four hours (including handling, storage and transportation); if prepared food is kept at room temperature for less than two hours, it can be refrigerated for final use later or used within the four-hour limit). Furthermore, they are also encouraged to adopt more proactive measures to prevent tampering with food in the course of the delivery process to protect food hygiene.