

CFS announces test results of targeted surveillance on nutrition labelling of prepackaged candies and chocolates

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (May 11) released the test results of a targeted food surveillance project on the nutrition labelling of prepackaged candies and chocolates. Among 40 samples tested, except for three samples with sodium content found to be inconsistent with the declared values on their nutrition labels which were announced earlier, all the remaining samples passed the test.

"The CFS collected samples from different retail outlets for the targeted food surveillance project. Tests were conducted to check if the energy content and specified nutrient content (total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugars, sodium, protein and carbohydrates) are consistent with the declared values on their nutrition labels. Results show that the actual sodium contents of three candy and chocolate samples were higher than the declared content on the nutrition labels," a spokesman for the CFS said.

The CFS has announced the irregularities earlier, and the vendors concerned have also stopped selling the relevant batch of the affected products. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence.

The Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W) require all applicable prepackaged foods to list out the ingredients and the content of energy plus seven core nutrients, namely carbohydrates, protein, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and sugars, and regulate any associated nutrition claims.

Nutrition labelling can assist consumers in making informed food choices, encourage food manufacturers to apply sound nutrition principles in the formulation of foods, and regulate misleading or deceptive labels and claims. According to Section 61 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), if any person falsely describes food or misleads as to the nature, substance or quality of the food on a label of the food sold by him or her, he or she shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

The CFS will continue to conduct surveillance on other food samples to check if their energy content and specified nutrient content are consistent with the declared values on their nutrition labels, and the results will be released in due course. The spokesman reminded the food trade to comply with the law, and urged members of the public to pay attention to the information of nutrition labels when purchasing food to make informed food choices so as to achieve a balanced diet and stay healthy.