

# CFS finds excessive Bacillus cereus in black glutinous rice dessert sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (September 13) announced that a sample of black glutinous rice dessert was found to contain an excessive amount of *Bacillus cereus*. The CFS is following up on the case.

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned black glutinous rice dessert sample from a restaurant in Kennedy Town for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 260 000 per gram. According to the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, if ready-to-eat food contains *Bacillus cereus* at a level of more than 100 000 per gram, it is considered unsatisfactory," a spokesman for the CFS said.

The CFS has inspected the food premises, instructed it to suspend the sale of the affected food product, provided education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff, and requested them to carry out a thorough cleaning and disinfection, as well as provide an improvement plan. The CFS has informed the food premises concerned of the above irregularity, and prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence.

"*Bacillus cereus* is commonly found in the environment. Unhygienic conditions in food processing and storage may give rise to its growth. Consuming food contaminated with excessive *Bacillus cereus* or its heat-stable toxins may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting and diarrhoea," the spokesman said.

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

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. The investigation is ongoing.