

CFS finds excessive Bacillus cereus in fried rice sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (May 3) that a sample of fried rice was found to contain an excessive amount of *Bacillus cereus*. The CFS is following up on the case.

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned fried rice sample from a restaurant in Tsuen Wan for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 1.5 million 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 CFS spokesman said.

The CFS has informed the restaurant concerned of the above irregularity and instructed it to suspend the sale of the food concerned. The CFS has also inspected the food premises, 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.

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.

"*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.

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