

CFS finds excessive coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms in sample of rice with chicken

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 29) announced that a sample of rice with chicken was found to contain an excessive amount of coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms. The CFS is following up on the case.

A CFS spokesman said, "Following up on a food complaint, the CFS took the above-mentioned sample from a restaurant in Sha Tin for testing. The result showed that the food sample contained coagulase-positive staphylococci at a level of 21 000 organisms per gram. Under the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, ready-to-eat food that contains coagulase-positive staphylococci at a level of more than 10 000 organisms per gram is considered unsatisfactory."

The CFS has informed the restaurant concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to suspend the sale of the food concerned. The CFS has also 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 a thorough cleaning and disinfection. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence.

According to Section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), all food 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.

"Coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms can produce enterotoxins that cause food poisoning. Common symptoms include nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain, often accompanied by diarrhoea," the spokesman added.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health.