

CFS proactively follows up on food poisoning outbreak involving tuna fillet

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department said today (June 8) that it is proactively following up on a food poisoning outbreak involving tuna fillet, including inspecting the restaurant concerned. A sample of tuna fillet collected from the restaurant was found to contain a toxic metabolite, histamine. The CFS is following up on the case.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "Upon notification by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health of food poisoning cases involving tuna fillet, the CFS immediately sent staff to the restaurant concerned in Tsim Sha Tsui to conduct investigation and take samples for testing. The test results showed that a tuna fillet sample contained histamine at a level of 2 600 milligrams per kilogram, which can cause food-borne intoxication. The restaurant concerned has already stopped sale and discarded the affected product according to the CFS's advice. The CFS has also provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff concerned, and instructed them to carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection, as well as to implement improvement measures to ensure food safety."

According to section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), all food for sale in Hong Kong, whether 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.

"Histamine is a toxic metabolite commonly found in certain kinds of fish such as tuna, sardine, mackerel and anchovy, as a result of bacterial spoilage. Consumption of fish containing high levels of histamine can cause food-borne intoxication. Symptoms of histamine poisoning include a tingling and burning sensation around the mouth, facial flushing and sweating, nausea, vomiting, headache, palpitations, dizziness and rash. The onset of intoxication symptoms is within a few hours after consumption and these symptoms will normally disappear in 12 hours without long-term effects," the spokesman said.

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