

CFS urges public not to consume a kind of bottled fruit juice drink contaminated with patulin

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (April 17) announced that a sample of a bottled fruit juice drink imported from Australia was found to be contaminated with a mycotoxin, patulin, at a level exceeding the action level adopted by the CFS. A follow-up is in progress.

"The CFS collected the abovementioned sample at a supermarket in Hung Hom for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained patulin at a level of 260 parts per billion (ppb), exceeding the action level of 50 ppb adopted by the CFS. The level is the same as the standard of the Codex Alimentarius Commission on patulin in apple or apple juice," a CFS spokesman said.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Organic Apple & Blackcurrant Juice
Brand: Pure Tassie
Country of origin: Australia
Importer/Distributor: PARKnSHOP (HK) Limited
Volume: 1.5 litre per bottle
Best-before date: October 6, 2020

The CFS has informed the importer/distributor concerned of the irregularity. The importer/distributor has stopped sale and removed from shelves all batches of the affected product and initiated a recall according to the CFS' instructions. Members of the public may call the importer/distributor's hotline at 2606 8658 for enquiries about the recall during office hours. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence.

"Patulin mostly occurs in rotten apple and its products. Animal studies showed that ingesting high doses of patulin can induce liver, spleen and kidney damage, as well as toxicity to the immune system. For humans, nausea, gastrointestinal disturbances and vomiting have been reported," the spokesman said.

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.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health. An investigation is ongoing.