

CFS urges public not to consume boletes suspected to contain mixture of species including inedible mushrooms

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (November 30) called on the public not to consume two batches of loose boletes as the products are suspected to contain a mixture of species including inedible species.

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS is following up on a food poisoning case suspected to have been caused by consuming mushrooms, which was referred earlier by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, and has enhanced surveillance on boletes on sale in the market. The CFS collected samples from retail outlets of boletes at Luen Wo Hui Market, Fanling, for testing during its investigation. According to the assessment by a mycologist on the samples, the boletes from two retail outlets at Luen Wo Hui Market contained inedible species of mushrooms."

The spokesman continued, "A preliminary investigation showed that the operator of one of the retail outlets had purchased and brought the affected product to Hong Kong and sold it as loose items. In addition, the CFS has also followed up with the importer of the affected product sold at another retail outlet. A preliminary investigation showed that the affected product was for sale only at the retail outlet as loose items. The CFS has instructed the retail outlets to stop sales and remove from shelves the affected products. For enquiries on the concerned products, members of the public may call the outlets' hotline at 2676 6448 and 2677 4772 respectively during office hours."

The CFS urged members of the public who have purchased and still possess the affected products to stop consuming them, and to seek medical advice immediately if symptoms develop after consuming the products.

Mushroom poisoning is generally acute and manifested by a variety of symptoms, depending on the species and amount consumed. The incubation period is usually short. Gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain are the commonest symptoms. Sometimes distinguishing features such as extreme thirst, profuse sweating, hallucination, coma and other neurological symptoms may occur.

Consumers are advised to heed the following points when buying and eating mushrooms:

- Do not buy mushroom products which may contain a mix of unknown species;
- Do not buy mushrooms which look unhygienic (with growing substrates left with the product) or show signs of spoilage (with coloured spots/abnormal

smell/slime, etc);

- Wash and cook mushrooms thoroughly before consumption; and
- Seek medical treatment immediately if mushroom poisoning is suspected.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the case and take necessary action to safeguard food safety and public health. The investigation is ongoing.