

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 (June 21) called on the public not to consume a batch of prepackaged/loose boletes as the product is suspected to contain a mixture of species including inedible species.

A CFS spokesman said, "Following up on a food poisoning case suspected to have been caused by consuming boletes, which was referred earlier by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, the CFS collected samples from the retail outlet which sold the product concerned in Ap Lei Chau for testing during its investigation. According to the assessment by a mycologist on the samples, the boletes concerned contained inedible species of mushrooms."

The spokesman continued, "The retailer concerned was also the importer of the affected product. The CFS has followed up with the vendor. Preliminary investigation showed that the affected batch of product was for sale at the abovementioned retail outlet only. The Centre has requested the vendor concerned to stop sale of the affected batch of the product and initiate a recall on all the boletes sold after November 17 last year. Members of the public may call its hotline at 9480 8730 during office hours for enquiries about the recall."

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

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 fresh 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.