

CHP investigates food poisoning cluster

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 28) investigating a food poisoning cluster affecting 14 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The cluster involved six males and eight females aged between 18 and 23, who developed fever, abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhoea about 25 to 58 hours after having poon choi for dinner at a university dormitory on January 22.

Of those affected, eight persons sought medical advice. None of them required hospitalisation.

A preliminary investigation by the CHP revealed that the affected persons had consumed poon choi supplied and prepared by a branch of the Café de Coral located at the ground floor of Kin Liong Mansion, Nos. 16-30 North Street, Kennedy Town. Staff of the CHP and the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department have conducted an investigation at the restaurant, examined the cooking process and food hygiene, and taken environmental samples for testing.

Preliminary investigation by the CFS showed that cross-contamination of raw and cooked food during the preparation process was suspected. The CFS immediately instructed the premises concerned to immediately stop supplying the poon choi in question, and to clean and disinfect the premises. The CFS also provided advice on enhancing food safety and hand hygiene to the operators and staff.

The investigation of the CHP and CFS is ongoing. It cannot be ruled out that the number of affected persons may increase.

"In the festive season, food and environmental hygiene are the keys to preventing food poisoning. While some may cook for the Family Reunion Dinner and the New Year Feast, some may choose poon choi takeaway as an alternative. Chilled poon choi should be kept at four degrees Celsius or below. When collecting and transporting poon choi, make sure it is kept at above 60 degrees Celsius. Before consuming poon choi, it should be reheated thoroughly till the core temperature reaches at least 75 degrees Celsius," a spokesman for the CHP reminded.

More information on the [healthy tips for enjoying poon choi](#) and [guidelines for safe production of poon choi](#) can be found on the websites of the CHP and CFS.