

CHP investigates four suspected food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 8) investigating four suspected food poisoning clusters affecting 14 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The first cluster involved two males and two females, aged 34 to 43, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea and nausea about 11 to 22 hours after having dinner at home on February 5.

The second cluster involved two males and three females, aged four to 78, who developed similar symptoms about four to 13 hours after having dinner at home on the same day.

The third cluster involved one male and one female, aged 53 to 55, who developed similar symptoms about 15 to 47 hours after having dinner at home on the same day.

The fourth cluster involved two males and one female, aged 54 to 60, who developed similar symptoms about 12 to 19 hours after having dinner at home on the same day.

Eight of the affected persons have sought medical advice and one required hospitalisation. All patients are in a stable condition.

The CHP's preliminary investigation revealed that all affected persons have consumed "Poon Choi" bought from a restaurant in Tuen Mun for the dinner.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;

- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.

Food safety when handling "Poon Choi":

- Avoid early collection. Generally, half an hour to one hour before consumption is preferred. When collecting "Poon Choi", make sure it is kept at above 60 degrees Celsius;
- Read and follow the reheating instructions carefully and properly;
- Before consuming "Poon Choi", should reheat it thoroughly till the core temperature reaches at least 75 degrees Celsius; and
- Use communal chopsticks and spoons during consumption.

More health tips for enjoying "Poon Choi" are available on the [website of the CHP](#).