

CHP investigates suspected food poisoning cluster

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 3) investigating one suspected food poisoning cluster affecting 11 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The cluster involved eight boys and two girls, aged 3 to 5, and a female teacher, who developed abdominal pain and diarrhoea about 5.5 to 15 hours after having lunch at a kindergarten in Eastern District on November 1. One of the affected persons sought medical advice and none required hospitalisation. All affected persons are in stable condition.

Initial investigations of the CHP revealed that the affected persons had consumed common food and the food concerned was steamed rice with pumpkin and diced pork. The poisoning might have been caused by *Bacillus cereus* or *Clostridium perfringens*.

The personnel from the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department have conducted investigation at the concerned premises. The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

To prevent foodborne 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;
- Pre-cooked or leftover foods should be stored and reheated properly before consumption;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hotpot 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 foods;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine or wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.