

# CHP investigates suspected food poisoning cluster

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (September 10) investigating a suspected food poisoning cluster affecting 11 tourists of two inbound tour groups comprising 61 tourists from the Mainland. The CHP reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The cluster involved eight males and three females aged between 55 and 68, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and fever after having lunch and dinner at two restaurants in To Kwa Wan on September 9.

All affected persons sought medical advice. None of them required hospitalisation. All patients are in stable condition.

Initial investigations by the CHP revealed that the affected persons had consumed common food. The personnel from the CHP and the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department have conducted an inspection at the restaurant where the affected persons had dinner, took food sample for laboratory testing. The CFS's personnel also instructed the concerned premise to suspend operation with immediate effect, carry out cleaning and disinfection of the premises, and improve food preparation process and food hygiene. The officers do not rule out that the causes of food poisoning include cross-contamination of food, premature preparation of food and failure to reheat thoroughly. The personnel from the CFS will conduct inspection at the restaurant where the affected persons had lunch. The CHP and CFS's investigations are ongoing.

The CHP has contacted with the Travel Industry Authority and the travel agencies. Preliminary information shows that no other tourists have been affected. The CHP will maintain liaison with relevant parties and continue to monitor the situations of relevant tourists.

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.