

CHP investigates three food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 25) investigating three epidemiologically linked food poisoning clusters affecting eight persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The first cluster involved two females aged 17 and 48, who developed vomiting, diarrhoea, and fever about 33 to 43 hours after having dinner at a restaurant in Mong Kok on June 19.

The second cluster involved two males and two females aged between 30 and 49, who developed similar symptoms about 33 to 56 hours after their supper at the same restaurant on June 20.

The third cluster involved a male and a female aged 24 and 20 respectively, who developed similar symptoms about 34 to 37 hours after their supper at the same restaurant on June 21.

Among the eight affected persons, four of them sought medical advice. None of them required hospitalisation and all of them are in stable condition.

Initial investigations by the CHP revealed that the affected persons had consumed common food and the food concerned were grilled oysters and grilled lamb skewers. The incident might have been caused by norovirus and/or Salmonella.

Personnel from the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department immediately conducted an inspection at the restaurant last night (June 24) and instructed the premises concerned to suspend the sale of relevant food as well as carry out cleaning and disinfection of the premises. The CFS has also provided health education related to food safety and environmental hygiene to the staff of the premises. The investigations of the CHP and the CFS are 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.