

CHP investigates two food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (July 25) investigating two epidemiologically linked food poisoning clusters affecting tourists of inbound tour groups from the Mainland. The CHP reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

All affected persons had meals in Hong Kong and subsequently travelled to Macao with the tour groups and sought medical advice there. According to the epidemiological investigations by the CHP and Macao authorities, two clusters with 13 affected persons were identified.

The first cluster involved five males and three females aged between 48 and 68, who developed abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea about 14 hours after having lunch in a restaurant in To Kwa Wan on July 22. The stool sample of one of the patients tested positive for *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*.

The other cluster involved two males and three females aged between 26 and 57, who developed similar symptoms about nine hours after having lunch in the same restaurant on the same day.

All affected persons have sought medical advice in Macao. None of them required hospitalisation and all of them are in stable condition.

Initial investigations revealed that the affected persons aforementioned had consumed common food, while some other tour groups also patronised the restaurant. The CHP is currently contacting other tour groups to find out if they are being affected. The personnel from the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department have conducted an inspection at the restaurant. 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.