

CHP investigates two food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 29) investigating two epidemiologically linked food poisoning clusters affecting six persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The first cluster involved two females aged 41 and 45, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, and fever about nine to 19 hours after having lunch at a restaurant in Wan Chai on October 25.

The other cluster involved two males and two females, aged between 32 and 34, who developed similar symptoms about 16 to 22 hours after having lunch at the same restaurant on the same day.

Among the six affected persons, five of them sought medical advice. Two of them required hospitalisation. The stool specimens of the two hospitalised persons were positive for Salmonella upon laboratory testing. All patients are in stable condition.

Initial investigations by the CHP revealed that the affected persons had consumed common food and the food concerned was tiramisu.

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, took a food sample for examination, and instructed the premises concerned to suspend the sale of relevant food as well as carry out cleaning and disinfection of the premises. The officers have also provided health education related to food safety and environmental hygiene to the staff of the premises. The officers initially suspected that the food concerned was made inadequately and was stored under improper temperatures.

The CHP and CFS's investigation is ongoing and it cannot rule out that the number of cases will increase.

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

- For dishes that often use lightly cooked or uncooked eggs, choose pasteurised eggs, egg products or dried egg powder;
- 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.