

CHP investigates two suspected food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (July 28) investigating two suspected food poisoning clusters affecting 11 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The first cluster involved six males and three females, aged 3 to 62, who developed abdominal pain, fever, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea about 13 to 20 hours after having dinner at a restaurant in Tsim Sha Tsui on July 23.

The other cluster involved a 33-year-old male and a 29-year-old female, who developed similar symptoms about 13 hours after having dinner at the same restaurant on the same day.

Six of the affected persons sought medical advice and none required hospitalisation. All affected persons are in stable condition.

Epidemiological investigations of the CHP revealed that the clusters might have been caused by Salmonella. It is suspected the food concerned was soft scrambled egg.

The Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has conducted an inspection at the restaurant. Initial investigations revealed that the reasons causing food poisoning include inadequate cooking and improper food holding temperatures. The 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;
- 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.