

CHP investigates two suspected food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 27) 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 one male and two females, aged between 28 and 46, who developed abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and generalised weakness about three to 12 hours and 30 minutes after having dinner at a restaurant in Causeway Bay on February 24. One of the affected persons sought medical advice and none required hospitalisation. All affected persons are in stable condition.

The other cluster involved eight males, aged between 29 and 36, who developed abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, generalised weakness and dizziness about 24 to 46 hours after having dinner from the same restaurant on the same day. Three of the affected persons sought medical advice and none required hospitalisation. All affected persons are in stable condition.

Initial investigations of the CHP revealed that the affected persons had consumed a variety of common food (including raw oysters and sashimi). The incident might have been caused by *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* and/or norovirus.

The personnel from the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department have conducted an inspection at the restaurant. The CHP's 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;
- 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.