

CHP investigates two suspected food poisoning clusters

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

The first cluster involved three females aged 30, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting about eight to 26 hours after having dinner at a restaurant in Tai Hang on February 24.

The other cluster involved one male and three females, aged between 25 and 27, who developed similar symptoms about five to 39 hours after having dinner at the same restaurant on February 25.

Three of the affected persons sought medical advice and one of them required hospitalisation. That person was discharged after treatment. All affected persons are in stable condition.

Initial investigations of the CHP revealed that the affected persons had consumed common food and the food concerned was raw oysters. The incident might have been caused by *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* and/or norovirus.

Personnel from the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department have conducted investigations at both the restaurants and supplier levels immediately. An investigation by the CFS revealed that the raw oysters involved in the above food poisoning clusters came from the same exporter as those consumed by the affected persons in the suspected food poisoning clusters involving a restaurant in Causeway Bay, [announced](#) yesterday (February 28). The CFS has instructed the trade to suspend importing and selling of the raw oysters concerned. Investigations by the CFS and the CHP 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.