

CHP reports investigation of food poisoning clusters at Grand Hyatt Hong Kong hotel

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (June 21) reported the latest progress of its investigation into the [food poisoning clusters](#) involving three restaurants located in the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong hotel. Food businesses should pay attention to and comply with the relevant food safety guidelines.

Since the relevant clusters had been announced on June 12, the CHP has set up a hotline for enquiries by persons who may be affected. Nine enquiries have been received so far. After investigations, a total of eight epidemiologically linked food poisoning clusters were confirmed by the CHP including the three earlier announced clusters, involving nine males and six females aged between 3 and 42. All affected persons have consumed vanilla-flavoured ice cream at restaurants located in the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong hotel on June 1 or 2. They developed abdominal pain, fever, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea about 15 to 65 hours after consuming the food concerned.

All of the 15 affected persons have sought medical advice. Four of them required hospitalisation and were discharged after treatment. All patients are in stable condition. The stool specimens of six affected persons were positive for Salmonella upon laboratory testing. Four of the Salmonella isolates belongs to the same group of Salmonella enteritidis. In view of the epidemiological investigations and test results, the affected persons' symptoms were very likely related to consumption of the concerned ice cream provided by the hotel.

Following notification of the incident from the CHP on June 11 evening, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) and the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) immediately conducted investigations at the relevant premises and the ice cream production kitchen concerned. It also reviewed the food preparation process in detail and collected samples (including food and environmental samples) for testing. Besides, the concerned premises have been instructed to immediately suspend the production and sale of relevant food as well as to carry out cleaning and disinfection of the premises. Meanwhile, the CFS also provided advice on food safety and environmental hygiene to person-in-charge and staff of the restaurants.

The personnel from the CHP and the FEHD again visited the restaurants and the ice cream production kitchen on June 12 for further inspection and collection of food samples for further testing. So far, no salmonella was found in the ice cream and vanilla oil samples, environmental samples and staff stool samples collected from the relevant premises. The FEHD will review the overall investigation result and will initiate prosecution against the premises concerned if there is sufficient evidence. The FEHD continued

its inspection on a daily basis, and confirmed that the premises have suspended the production and sale of the food concerned. Follow-up actions 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 using the toilet.