

Packed milk drink sample found to contain excessive Bacillus cereus

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 8) announced that a packed milk drink sample was found to contain excessive amount of Bacillus cereus, a pathogen. The CFS is following up on the case.

Details of the product are as follows:

Product name: Skimmed Hi-Calcium Milk Drink
Manufacturer: Nestlé Hong Kong Limited
Volume: 236 millilitre per pack
Use-by date: June 2, 2018

A CFS spokesman said, "The sample was collected from a supermarket in Kwun Tong for testing under the CFS' routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained Bacillus cereus at a level of 4 600 000 per gram. Under the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, if ready-to-eat food contains Bacillus cereus at a level of more than 100 000 per gram, it is considered unsatisfactory."

The spokesman said that the CFS had informed the manufacturer and the vendor concerned of the test result. Investigation was conducted at the production plant and the supermarket concerned and follow-up samples were collected for further testing. Investigation is ongoing. The CFS had also provided health education on food safety and hygiene for the staff of the production plant and the supermarket and requested them to carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection.

According to Section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), all food available for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

Bacillus cereus is commonly found in the environment. Unhygienic conditions in food processing and storage may give rise to its growth. Consuming food contaminated with excessive Bacillus cereus may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting and diarrhoea.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action in order to safeguard public health and food safety.