

Prepackaged shrimp noodles sample detected with excessive preservative and in breach of food labelling regulation

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (August 12) that a sample of prepackaged shrimp noodles was found to contain sulphur dioxide, a preservative, at a level exceeding the legal limit, and the functional class and name of the additive were not declared on the food label. Members of the public should not consume the affected batch of the product. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batch of the product immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: HONGKONG SHRIMP FLAVOR NOODLE

Brand: GOURMET ALLEY

Place of origin: Hong Kong

Net weight: 454 grams per pack

Best-before date: June 11, 2023

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample of shrimp noodles from an online shop for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained sulphur dioxide at a level of 52 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the legal limit of 20 ppm. The functional class and name of the additive were also not declared on the food label," a CFS spokesman said.

"The CFS has informed the vendor concerned and the manufacturer which produced the shrimp noodles of the irregularities, and instructed the vendor concerned to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of the product. The vendor concerned has initiated a recall according to the CFS' instructions. Members of the public may call its hotline at 2606 8658 during office hours for enquiries about the recall. The CFS is also tracing the source of the affected product," the spokesman added.

Sulphur dioxide is a preservative which can be used in a variety of foods including dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables and salted fish products. Sulphur dioxide is water soluble, and most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headache and nausea after consumption.

The spokesman reminded the food trade that the use of preservatives in food must comply with the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD). Furthermore, the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap.

132W) require that for all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong containing sulphite in a concentration of 10 ppm or more, the functional class of the sulphite and its name shall be specified in the list of ingredients. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.