

Sample of ham and egg bun detected with excessive Bacillus cereus

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 17) announced that a sample of ham and egg bun was found to contain an excessive amount of *Bacillus cereus*, a pathogen. The CFS is following up on the case.

"Following up on a food complaint, the CFS collected the above sample from a convenience store in Sheung Wan for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 4.5 million 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," a CFS spokesman said.

The spokesman said that the CFS had informed the vendor concerned of the unsatisfactory test result and instructed it to suspend the sale of the affected food. The CFS has also provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the staff of the vendor and is tracing the source of the affected product.

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 continue to follow up on the incident, and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health.