

# Sample of soybean curd dessert with sesame sweet soup detected with excessive Bacillus cereus

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 31) announced that a sample of soybean curd dessert with sesame sweet soup was found to contain an excessive amount of Bacillus cereus, a pathogen. The CFS is following up on the case.

"The CFS took the above-mentioned sample from a dessert shop in Wong Tai Sin for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained Bacillus cereus at a level of 220,000 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," a CFS spokesman said.

"The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the unsatisfactory result. The vendor has already stopped selling the affected kind of food according to the CFS' advice. The CFS has also provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the staff of the vendor," the spokesman said.

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. Investigation is ongoing.