

Bottled pesto may contain allergen (peanuts)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (January 15) said that a kind of bottled pesto manufactured in Italy might contain an allergen, peanuts, but it was not declared on the product's food label. Consumers who are allergic to peanuts are advised not to eat the product concerned. The trade should also stop using or selling the product concerned immediately.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Tesco Green Pesto

Brand: Tesco

Place of origin: Italy

Packing size: 190 grams per bottle

Best-before dates: All batches dated on or before November 1, 2022

"The CFS, through its Food Incident Surveillance System, noted notices issued by the UK, Ireland and Singaporean authorities concerned that several kinds of Tesco pesto products are under recall because they may contain peanuts but the ingredient is not declared on the food label," a spokesman for the CFS said.

Upon learning of the incident, the CFS immediately followed up with major local importers and retailers. Preliminary investigation revealed that an importer, CR Vanguard (HK) Company Limited, had imported some of the affected batches of the abovementioned product which were on sale in its retail outlets. The importer had already stopped sale and removed from shelves the affected batches of the product upon supplier's notification earlier on. It has also initiated a recall according to CFS' instructions. Enquiries about the recall can be made to the vendor's hotline at 2586 3000 during office hours.

"Peanuts are a known food allergen. Those who are allergic to it may develop symptoms like vomiting, diarrhoea, asthma and rash upon consumption. In severe cases anaphylactic shock may even develop," the spokesman said.

He advised consumers who are allergic to peanuts not to consume the products concerned. Those who feel unwell after consuming them should seek medical treatment.

The Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap 132W) require that all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong should list out the food's ingredients in its label. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment.

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