

CHP investigates food poisoning cluster

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 4) investigating a food poisoning cluster, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The cluster involved 24 persons who attended a domestic Chinese New Year meal gathering with about 100 participants. The cluster comprised 13 males and 11 females aged between 3 and 76 who developed fever, abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting about 10 to 20 hours after having the lunch on that day (January 31).

Of those affected, four persons sought medical advice. None of them required hospitalisation.

A preliminary investigation by the CHP revealed that the affected persons had consumed poon Choi supplied and prepared by Kam Sha Kok Cafe located at No. 9-12, Cooked Food Stall, G/F, Sha Kok Estate, Shatin. Staff of the CHP and the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department have conducted an investigation at the restaurant, examined the cooking process and food hygiene, and taken food and environmental samples for testing.

A preliminary investigation by the CFS showed that the food concerned was prepared too early in advance and was stored under an improper temperature. The CFS immediately instructed the premises concerned to immediately stop supplying the poon Choi in question, and to thoroughly clean and disinfect the premises. The CFS also provided advice on enhancing food safety and hygiene to the operators and staff as well as instructed the premises to improve its food preparation process.

The investigation of the CHP and the CFS is ongoing. It cannot be ruled out that the number of affected persons may increase.

"In the festive season, food and environmental hygiene are the keys to preventing food poisoning. While some may cook for a family reunion dinner and a new year feast, some may choose poon Choi takeaway as an alternative. Chilled poon Choi should be kept at 4 degrees Celsius or below. When collecting and transporting poon Choi, make sure it is kept at above 60 degrees C. Before consuming poon Choi, it should be reheated thoroughly till the core temperature reaches at least 75 degrees C," a spokesman for the CHP reminded.

More information on [healthy tips for enjoying poon Choi](#) and [guidelines for safe production of poon Choi](#) can be found on the websites of the CHP and CFS.