

CHP investigates two food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (May 30) investigating two food poisoning clusters affecting four persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The first cluster involved one man and one woman, aged 40 and 45, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting about seven to 10 hours after consuming ready-to-eat cooked food bought from a supermarket for dinner at home on May 23.

The second cluster also involved one man and one woman, aged 46 and 51, who developed similar symptoms about 10 to 11 hours after having the same ready-to-eat cooked food bought from the same supermarket at home the same evening.

All those affected sought medical advice. One from each cluster was discharged upon hospitalisation, and their stool specimens tested positive for *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*. All patients are now in a stable condition.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and eating utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.