

Edible ice sample detected with coliform bacteria exceeding guideline limit

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (August 5) announced that an edible ice sample was found to contain coliform bacteria exceeding the limit set out in the Microbiological Guidelines for Food. Follow-up is in progress.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The Centre collected a sample of edible ice produced at a restaurant in Shek Tong Tsui for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained coliform bacteria at a level of 150 colony-forming units per 100 millilitres."

According to the Guidelines, the microbiological criteria for coliform bacteria for loose edible ice from retail outlets should be less than 100 colony-forming units per 100ml. The fact that the coliform count exceeded the Guidelines' level indicated unsanitary conditions or poor hygiene practices during or after production of ice, but did not mean that consumption would lead to food poisoning.

"The CFS has informed the restaurant concerned of the above irregularity and instructed it to suspend the sale of cold drinks with ice cubes. The CFS has also inspected the food premises, provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the restaurant, and requested it to review and improve the food production process and carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection," the spokesman said.

Traders are advised to follow the Guidelines on Hygienic Production and Handling of Ice in Food Premises and observe good hygiene practices when handling ice. The CFS will continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health. Investigation is ongoing.