

Test results of microbiological quality of poon choi all satisfactory (with photo)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (December 5) announced the test results of a recently completed seasonal food surveillance project on the microbiological quality of poon choi. A total of 30 samples were collected and all passed the tests.

A CFS spokesman said, "As poon choi is popular for gatherings during winter, and there were previous cases of bacterial food poisoning associated with poon choi, the CFS has continued to conduct a seasonal food surveillance project this year to assess the microbiological quality of poon choi. A total of 30 poon choi samples were collected from different retailers (including online retailers) for testing of common food poisoning organisms including *Bacillus cereus*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Salmonella*, coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms and *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*."

Despite the satisfactory results of all samples tested, the spokesman reminded members of the public to be careful when purchasing and enjoying this seasonal delicacy. He advised consumers to order poon choi from licensed and reliable shops, reheat poon choi thoroughly before consumption, consume the food as soon as possible or keep the food at temperatures above 60 degrees Celsius, avoid prolonged storage of poon choi at room temperature to reduce the risk of bacteria growth, and stop consuming the food if it tastes or smells abnormal.

"The public should also maintain a balanced diet and avoid eating too much food with high levels of energy, sugar, salt or fat," the spokesman said.

He also appealed to the food trade to plan thoroughly in advance to secure adequate manpower, space and equipment for making poon choi and not to entertain orders beyond handling capacity. A well-organised work procedure can help prevent cross-contamination. As such, before preparation of poon choi, temporary food handlers should be trained to make sure that they are familiar with the working environment and adhere to safe food preparation practices. Traders are also reminded to check the quality of food ingredients and ensure that the temperatures of chilled and frozen foods are appropriate when they are delivered to them. In addition, to reduce the risk of food poisoning, they should avoid preparing food too far in advance and take note of the temperature in storing, transporting and preparing food.

"All food ingredients should be stored at safe temperatures while perishable items should be stored at 4 degrees C or below. The cooling time of cooked food should be reduced as far as possible. When transporting hot poon choi, it should be kept at above 60 degrees C, and for chilled poon

choi, it should be kept at 4 degrees C or below. Poon choi should be reheated thoroughly until the core temperature reaches 75 degrees C or above, or brought to boil before consumption. Poon choi of a larger portion requires more time to reheat before the food can be fully heated," the spokesman said.

"There have been food poisoning cases related to improper handling of poon choi in Hong Kong. Traders should provide clear advice on the proper methods of storing and reheating of poon choi to consumers, such as putting a reminder on the food label, so as to further reduce the risk of food poisoning due to improper handling," he added.

The CFS will continue its surveillance of poon choi available in the market to ensure food safety and protect the health of the public.



[EDB announces arrangements on application for S1 discretionary places](#)

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (December 5) announced that primary schools participating in the 2021/2023 Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System will receive application forms for Secondary One (S1) discretionary places (DPs) tomorrow (December 6) for distribution to the parents of Primary Six students. For students not studying in primary schools participating in the SSPA System (including newly arrived children who are eligible for participating in the SSPA), their parents can obtain the application forms at the School Places Allocation (SPA) Section of the EDB.

Parents wishing to apply for S1 DPs in government, aided and caput secondary schools as well as Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) secondary schools participating in the SSPA System for their children have to submit the applications directly to the schools concerned between January 3 and 17,

2023.

An EDB spokesman said, "The schools to which parents apply for DPs are not restricted by districts. Parents are strongly advised to consider the schools in all respects, such as their educational philosophy, tradition, religion, admission criteria, development and operation, as well as their children's abilities, aptitude and interests, so as to make a suitable school choice. Parents may refer to the relevant information in the Secondary School Profiles (www.chsc.hk/secondary) or school websites for reference.

Parents may refer to the Handbook for Application for Secondary One Discretionary Places for the list of government, aided and caput as well as participating DSS secondary schools accepting DP applications and the number of DPs for application. The Handbook will be distributed to primary schools tomorrow, when it will also be available on the bureau's homepage (www.edb.gov.hk) and 24-hour Automatic Telephone Enquiry System on 2891 0088.

Digitalisation of S1 admission

In line with the Smart Government strategy, the EDB will implement digitalisation of S1 admissions starting from 2023. Parents who have registered as SSPA e-Platform users and bound their account to "iAM Smart+" may submit DP applications and check application results via the SSPA e-Platform. The EDB encourages parents to register with "iAM Smart+" (www.iamsmart.gov.hk/reg) as early as possible for more convenient and faster services throughout the entire S1 application process. Please refer to the related videos and Parent's Guide on the bureau's homepage for detailed procedures for creating and logging in an SSPA e-Platform account and for submitting applications via the e-Platform.

Submission of S1 DP applications

Starting from this cycle, parents may submit the S1 DP application forms and other required documents to secondary schools via the SSPA e-Platform. If parents prefer to submit the duly completed application forms and other necessary documents directly to the schools in person, they should note the school office hours and the Vaccine Pass arrangement implemented in schools. If the applications are submitted by post, please ensure all documents are mailed before the deadline (based on the postmark date). The schools will post the Parent's Copy of the application form back to the parents for retention.

The two paper or electronic application forms that parents will receive will show Order of School Preference 1 and School Preference 2 respectively. Order of School Preference 1 stands for the student's first-choice school and Order of School Preference 2 stands for the student's second-choice school. In all circumstances, primary and secondary schools should not request students or parents to disclose their order of preference. Likewise, applicants and their parents should not indicate their order of preference to

schools.

The spokesman reminded parents to read carefully the Notes for Parents on Application for Secondary One Discretionary Places. Parents should not submit applications to more than two secondary schools participating in the SSPA no matter whether the applications are submitted in paper form or via the SSPA e-Platform. Otherwise, the DP applications of their children will be rendered void. In addition, if parents have submitted a paper application form to a secondary school, they should not submit a duplicate application via the SSPA e-Platform, and vice versa.

The spokesman added, "Students who are successful in the DP application stage will not be allocated a school place in central allocation (CA). Parents should, therefore, apply to schools of their preference. The EDB will match students' preferences against schools' Successful/Reserve Lists for Discretionary Places. If a student is successful in both schools to which he or she has applied, allocation will be based on the student's order of preference."

Notification arrangements for successful DP applicants

The spokesman reminded that under the notification arrangements for successful DP applicants, if students are included by participating secondary schools in their Successful Lists for Discretionary Places, their parents will receive notifications from the schools on March 31, 2023. Parents who have registered as SSPA e-Platform users will also receive notifications for successful DP applicants via the SSPA e-Platform on the same day. The parents concerned do not need to reply to the schools whether they would accept the offers. The allocation results of DPs and CA will be released at the same time on July 11, 2023.

If parents have enquiries about the DP application, they are advised to consult their children's primary schools or approach the secondary schools directly. For general enquiries, parents may contact the SPA Section of the EDB (Tel: 2832 7740 and 2832 7700; address: Office 2, 2/F, Manulife Financial Centre, 223 Wai Yip Street, Kwun Tong).

Temporary closure of 7-a-side turf soccer pitch at Hammer Hill Road Sports Ground

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 5) that the 7-a-side turf soccer pitch at Hammer Hill Road Sports Ground in

Wong Tai Sin District will be temporarily closed from December 15, 2022, to February 14, 2023, for improvement works.

For the most up-to-date closure schedules of the above leisure and sports facilities, the public may refer to the notices at the venue or contact venue staff directly.

Government conducts enforcement action on compulsory testing notice at building in Tseung Kwan O

The Trade and Industry Department, together with the Tseung Kwan O Police District and the Department of Health, conducted an enforcement operation today (December 5) at a building in Tseung Kwan O, which was included in a compulsory testing notice earlier. The operation commenced at around 8am and ended at around 11am today.

Starting from around 8am today, staff arranged by the Government stationed at the entrances/exits of Tower 6, Nan Fung Plaza, Tseung Kwan O to verify the testing certifications of persons subject to compulsory testing so as to confirm whether they had undergone testing in compliance with the requirement of the compulsory testing notice. Persons subject to compulsory testing had to present the SMS notification containing the results of COVID-19 tests or relevant proof, to prove that they had followed the requirement pursuant to the compulsory testing notice and completed the test within the specified period.

During the operation, 304 persons were checked. Among them, 9 persons were found to have failed to comply with the compulsory testing notice. They were subsequently issued compulsory testing orders, requiring them to undergo testing within a specified period. Fixed penalty notices of \$10,000 each were also issued to 5 of them.

The Government expresses gratitude to most persons subject to compulsory testing who complied with the compulsory testing notices for their co-operation to fight the virus together. A Government spokesman reminded that any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notice commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The Government will also issue the person concerned a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order is an offence, and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and an imprisonment for six months. The spokesman reiterated that the Government will continue to enforce the law strictly.

Also, the Government understands that the enforcement process may cause inconvenience to some residents, and appeals for understanding. Gratitude is also extended to members of the public and relevant organisations for their support and co-operation.

Toll of Tseung Kwan O Tunnel to be waived from 0.00am on December 11

The Transport Department (TD) today (December 5) reminded members of the public that the toll of the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel will be waived from 0.00am on December 11 (Sunday).

The Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel will open to traffic at 8am on December 11 and the toll of the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel will be waived from 0.00am on the same day. Motorists are reminded that works will be carried out in phases in the vicinity of the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel Toll Plaza starting from around 10pm on December 10, including closure of some of the traffic lanes for shutting down tolling facilities such as toll booths and modification of traffic signs and road markings. During this period, temporary traffic lanes will be set up in the vicinity of the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel Toll Plaza and the existing speed limit of 50 kilometres per hour will be maintained. Traffic signs and road markings will be set up on-site to guide motorists.

The spokesman said, "It is anticipated that the traffic at the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel will be very congested. Members of the public are advised to use public transport and consider using railway services for travelling to/from Kowloon and Tseung Kwan O. Motorists should allow sufficient travelling time, consider using alternative routes, exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of on-site staff."

From 0.00am on December 11, motorists can drive through the original Tseung Kwan O Tunnel Toll Plaza without stopping and paying the toll. Please refer to Annex 1 and Annex 2 for traffic arrangements at the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel Toll Plaza before and on the implementation day.

After the implementation of the toll waiver, road works will continue to be carried out in the vicinity of the original Tseung Kwan O Tunnel Toll Plaza including removal of tolling facilities and the canopy. Temporary traffic measures will be adjusted in phases in accordance with the works areas, and adequate traffic lanes will be reserved for vehicles to drive through the vicinity of the toll plaza.

For details on the toll waiver for the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel, please refer to the leaflet (Annex 3), visit the TD's website (www.td.gov.hk/en/transport_in_hong_kong/tunnels_and_bridges_n/toll_matters/t

[wtko/index.html](#)) or the "HKeMobility" mobile app.