
Targeted Food Surveillance on Microbiological Quality of Chinese Cold Dishes

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Background

- In Hong Kong, the world's gourmet paradise, various Chinese regional cuisines are available. Local Chinese food premises usually offer a wide variety of cold and hot dishes for consumers.
- Chinese cold dishes can be prepared in different ways and manual handling is usually involved in the preparation steps. Being cold dishes, they may be prepared in advance and stored for a period of time before serving and they are usually not reheated before consumption. These factors may affect the hygienic quality of the products.
- In view of this, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has conducted a targeted food surveillance since last year to assess the microbiological quality of various kinds of Chinese cold dishes.



Types of tests

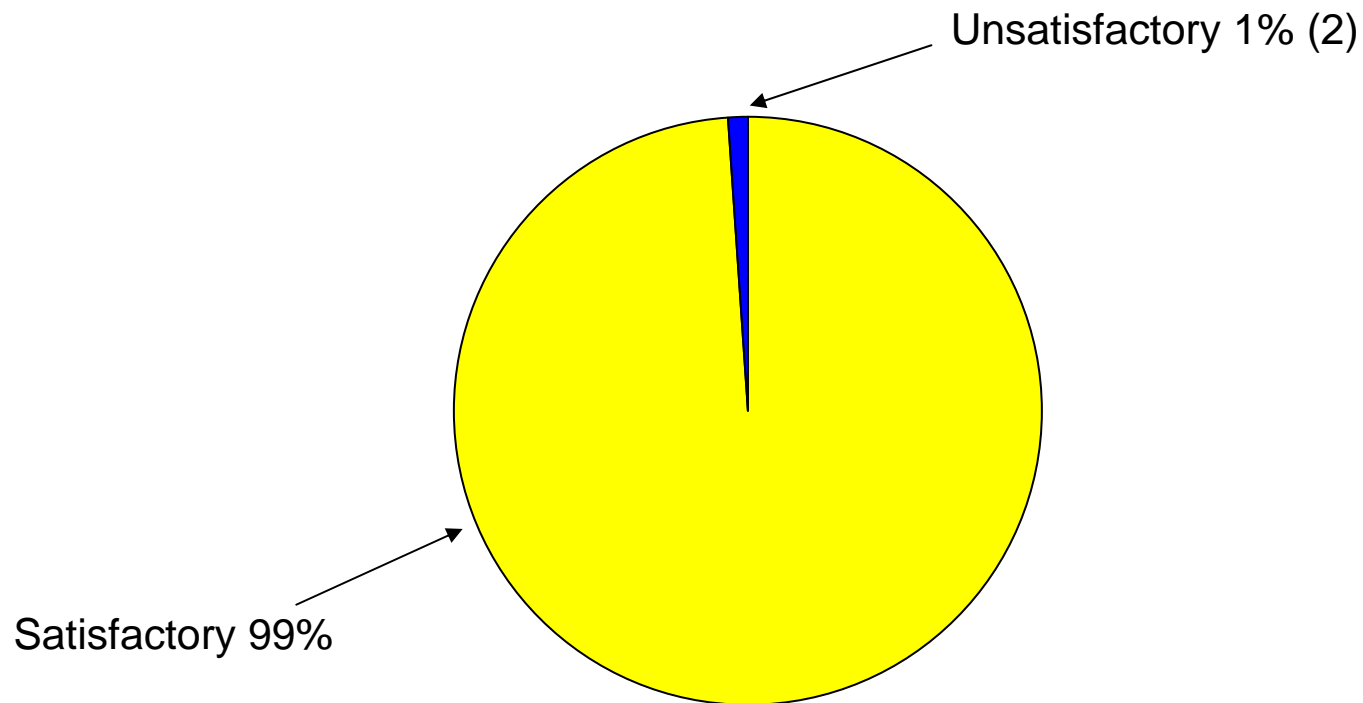
- The CFS collected 200 samples from different locations including food premises, food factories, supermarkets and convenient stores for testing pathogens from July to August this year:

- *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*
- *Salmonella*
- *Staphylococcus aureus*
- *Clostridium perfringens*
- *Bacillus cereus*



Overall results

- There were 2 unsatisfactory samples. Overall satisfactory rate was 99%.



Unsatisfactory results

- The 2 unsatisfactory samples are shown below:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Sliced boiled pork with jellyfish	<i>Salmonella</i>	Detected ⁽¹⁾
Vegetarian goose	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	100,000/g ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Intake of food with excessive amount of *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Salmonella* may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

Follow-up actions

- Trace source of food items in question.
- Request vendors to stop sale and dispose of incriminated food items.
- Issue warning letters to concerned vendors.
- Take follow-up samples for analysis which showed satisfactory results.

Advice for the trade

- Estimate the demand of each dish carefully to avoid over-production.
- Plan the production schedule ahead to avoid preparing food too far in advance.
- Purchase food ingredients from reliable sources.



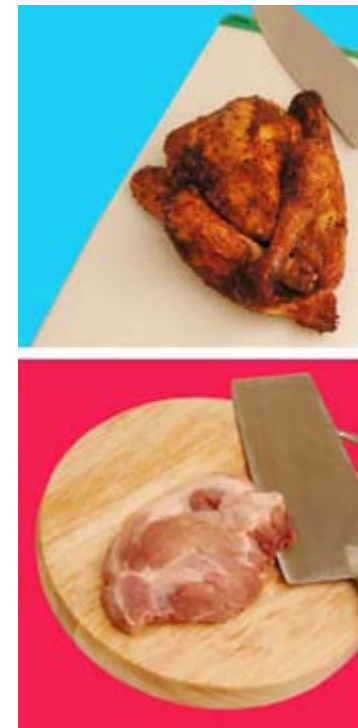
Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- Keep ready-to-eat dishes in covered containers and away from raw food, in the upper compartment if stored in the same refrigerator, with temperature at 4°C or below.



Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- Use separate utensils and to handle raw food and cooked food or ready-to-eat food in different areas.



Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- Food handlers should follow good personal hygiene practices, including:
 - wash hands thoroughly with running water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling foods, often during food preparation and after going to the toilet
 - wear clean and light-coloured outer clothing or protective overalls



Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- ❑ refrain from smoking and eating during preparation
- ❑ open wound should be covered by bright-coloured waterproof bandages or gloves
- ❑ suspend from engaging in any food handling work when suffering or suspected to be suffering from an infectious disease or presenting with symptoms of flu, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, sore throat and abdominal pain

Advice for consumers

- Patronise hygienic and reliable licensed food premises.
- Consume purchased cold dishes as soon as possible.
- If dishes are not consumed immediately, store them in a refrigerator at or below 4°C.

