
Seasonal Food Surveillance on Mooncakes

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Introduction

■ Background

- Mooncake is a festive food of the Mid-Autumn Festival.
- The Centre for Food Safety recently conducted a seasonal food surveillance project on mooncakes for microbiological and chemical analysis.

■ Objective

- To provide food safety information on mooncakes to consumers and the trade in a timely manner.

Types of test

- 250 samples (in 30 brandnames) of various types of mooncakes (including 154 traditional, 75 snowy, 9 ice-cream and 12 other mooncakes) were collected from retailers and food factories for:
 - Chemical analysis
 - Colouring matters (e.g. Sudan dyes, tartrazine)
 - Preservatives (e.g. sulphur dioxide, sorbic acid)
 - Antioxidants
 - Pesticides
 - Heavy metals
 - Aflatoxins
 - Mineral Oil
 - Microbiological analysis (e.g. total bacterial count, coliform organisms , *Listeria monocytogenes*)

Overall result

- All results were satisfactory.

Advice for trade

- Food manufacturers should purchase food ingredients from reliable suppliers.
- The trade should adhere to the "good manufacturing practice" (GMP) for manufacturing food products, and comply with the legal requirements when using food additives.
- Snowy and ice-cream mooncakes, which have not undergone baking or heating, should be handled hygienically during processing, transportation and storage. Snowy mooncakes should be kept at 4 °C or below, while ice-cream mooncakes at -18 °C or below.

Advice for consumers

■ Observe the “Five Keys” tips

1. Buy mooncakes from reliable retail outlets and do not patronise unlicensed hawkers. Check the package and expiry dates of the mooncakes and eat them within the recommended period;
2. Take mooncakes, particularly snowy and ice-cream mooncakes, home immediately after purchase, and keep them in refrigerator. Snowy mooncakes should be kept at 4 °C or below, while ice-cream mooncakes at -18 °C or below. Consume as soon as possible after taking mooncakes out from refrigerator;

Advice for consumers

3. Use an icebox when carrying snowy or ice-cream mooncakes outdoors and consume them as soon as possible;
4. Wrap mooncakes properly and keep separately from raw food when storing in the refrigerator;
5. Maintain good personal hygiene. Wash hands properly with liquid soap and running water before handling mooncakes.

Eat mooncakes in moderation as most of them are rich in sugar and fat. Maintain a balanced diet.