

Consumer Liaison Group Newsletter 12

~ Meetings ~

The Consumer Liaison Group (CLG) convened a discussion meeting on the evening of 16 September 2019 at the Communication Resource Unit of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS). The meeting, under the theme of “Members’ views on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and Food Safety”, covered the following main points:

Members’ knowledge on AMR: Members were unfamiliar with the term “antimicrobial resistance” but had heard of “drug-resistant bacteria”. Some members had the impression that they were related to drugs (e.g. taking antibiotics inappropriately could cause resistance in bacteria) rather than food (e.g. raw or undercooked food might harbour AMR bacteria).

Members’ knowledge on the causes and effects of AMR: Some members understood that eating food with antibiotic residues could increase the risk of contracting drug-resistant bacteria. Though most members had heard of the 5 Keys to Food Safety (e.g. cooking thoroughly and the core temperature required), few of them knew that poor personal/environmental hygiene and improper food handling processes were also risk factors for AMR in food. Some members were concerned that there would be no drugs available for treating infections caused by consumption of food containing AMR bacteria.

Members’ knowledge on high-risk foods: Members knew that food for raw consumption, raw or undercooked meat and seafood were high-risk foods.

Members’ comments on consumer advice on high-risk foods to be put on menus: A majority of members believed that this would help the public make informed and appropriate choices. Some members opined that the text and images should be

concise. In addition, some members thought that the public might not pay careful attention to the details on menus and be able to identify raw or undercooked food. It was suggested that the Government should enhance public education on high-risk foods.



Trade Guidelines:

https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food_leg/files/HighRiskFoodonMenus_1ft.pdf

Members’ suggestions for promoting AMR and food safety: Some members suggested that the Government could promote the message through radio broadcasting, YouTube advertising and Facebook. Some members said that the CFS should strengthen education on AMR and food safety for domestic helpers, as they would cook for the elderly, infants and young children. In addition, some members considered the name “antimicrobial resistance” too academic and “superbugs” too common, they suggested using the term “drug-resistant bacteria”. Members also suggested that the CFS should strengthen publicity on related food regulatory work and survey/test results.

The discussion reflected members’ concerns for AMR and food safety. Members hoped that the CFS would strengthen publicity and education, and they agreed that providing consumer advice on high-risk foods on menus would help the public make informed food choices.

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~ Reduce Salt Together – Bread ~

The Food and Health Bureau, the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food and the CFS held a media gathering on 27 September announcing the implementation of the Salt Reduction Scheme for bread, hoping that the trade could reduce the sodium contents in prepackaged white bread and wholemeal bread (with nutrition labels) within one year. CLG members were also invited to attend the event and join the bread tasting.



The CFS has set out voluntary sodium reduction targets for prepackaged white bread and wholemeal bread.

Too much salt can lead to health problems such as hypertension, heart diseases and stroke. Consuming two slices (50g each) of white bread with sodium content of 500mg/100g will lead to an intake of 500mg of sodium, which contributes to 25% of the daily upper intake recommended by the World Health Organization.

Since late last year, the CFS has discussed with bread manufacturers to reduce the salt contents in white bread and wholemeal bread through product reformulation. The average voluntary sodium reduction targets agreed are to reduce the average sodium (salt) contents by 10%. At present, the CFS has successfully invited seven bread manufacturers, including A-1 Bakery Co., (HK) Ltd., King Bakery Holdings Limited, Maria's Bakery, PARKnSHOP(HK) Limited, Saint Honore Cake Shop Ltd., Tai Pan Bread & Cakes Co. Ltd. and the Garden Company Limited, to be the first in joining the scheme.



CLG members tasted original and salt-reduced white bread and wholemeal bread.

On the event day, CLG members tried the original white bread and wholemeal bread and the 10% salt-reduced versions, which they found not much different in taste. Members said that for health reasons, they would choose bread with less salt.

預先包裝白方包及麥方包自願減鈉目標

Voluntary sodium reduction target for prepackaged white bread and wholemeal bread

以每100克計 As per 100g



上限490毫克鈉 平均380毫克鈉
Maximum 490mg sodium
Average 380mg sodium



上限470毫克鈉 平均380毫克鈉
Maximum 470mg sodium
Average 380mg sodium

Voluntary sodium reduction targets for prepackaged white bread and wholemeal bread.

~ Coming Activities ~

To provide opportunities for CLG members to understand food manufacturing processes and to facilitate communication with the trade, the CFS is going to organise visits to food premises. Please stay tuned for the details to be announced later.