
Targeted Food Surveillance on Non-bottled Drinks and Chinese Herb Tea

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Introduction

■ Background

- Many shops provide various kinds of beverage such as fruit juice, soya drinks, coffee, iced drinks and Chinese herb tea. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) recently conducted a targeted food surveillance project to assess the microbiological quality and the use of non-permitted colouring matters or sweetener in non-bottled drinks and Chinese herb tea.

Types of food samples tested

- 500 samples including the followings were collected:
 - 319 non-bottled drinks such as:
 - fruits juice, soya drinks, tea, coffee, soft drinks & iced drinks, etc.
 - 181 Chinese herb tea such as
 - 24-variety herb tea, hemp seed drink, sour plum drink and 5-flower tea, etc.

Types of tests

■ Microbiological analysis

- ❑ Pathogens (e.g., *Clostridium perfringens*, *Salmonella*, *Shigella* & *Staphylococcus aureus*)
- ❑ *E. coli*

■ Chemical analysis

- ❑ Sweeteners (including stevioside)
- ❑ Colouring matters (including Sudan dyes, rhodamine B & orange II, etc.)

Overall results

- All results were satisfactory.

Advice for food trade

- Observe good hygienic practice at all stages of food processing.
- The trade should adhere to the "good manufacturing practice" (GMP) for manufacturing food products, and comply with the legal requirements when using food additives.

Advice for consumers

- Patronized licensed premises for purchasing non-bottled drinks and Chinese herb tea.
- Pay attention to the hygienic condition of the premises.
- Maintain a balanced diet to minimize excessive exposure to food additives from a small range of food items.
- Avoid taking too much drinks that is high in sugar and energy.