

Seasonal Food Surveillance on Mooncakes

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Introduction

■ Background

- ❑ Mooncake is a seasonal food for Mid-Autumn Festival.
- ❑ The Centre for Food Safety recently conducted a seasonal food surveillance project on mooncakes.

■ Objective

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

Types of test

- 270 samples (in more than 20 brand names) of various types of mooncakes (including 127 traditional, 96 snowy, 12 ice-cream and 35 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** (such as total bacterial count, coliform organisms, Salmonella, Staphylococcus aureus, Listeria monocytogenes)

Overall result

- All the samples were satisfactory.



Advice for the 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 do not undergo baking process, are required to 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 to Food Safety”:
 - ❑ 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;
 - ❑ 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;
 - ❑ use an icebox when carrying snowy or ice-cream mooncakes outdoors and consume them as soon as possible;

Advice for consumers (Cont'd)



Being kept at 4 °C or below



Ice pack



Ice box



Cooler bag

Advice for consumers (Cont'd)

- ❑ wrap mooncakes properly and keep separately from raw food when storing in the refrigerator; and
 - ❑ maintain good personal hygiene. Wash hands properly with liquid soap and running water before handling mooncakes.
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- Avoid excessive eating of mooncakes as most of them are rich in sugar and fat. Maintain a balanced diet.